MERL OF MEDEVON,

AND OTHER

PROSE WRITINGS.

BY

JOHN PRESTON CAMPBELL.

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MERL OF MEDEVON

—AND—

OTHER PROSE WRITINGS,

—BY—

JOHN PRESTON CAMPBELL,

AUTHOR OF

"The Peri's Pardon," "Queen Sylvia," "The Summerless Sea,"

AND OTHER POEMS.

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TO MRS. M. L. WILLARD,

THE FRIEND AND PLAYMATE OF MY YOUTH,

THESE PROSE WRITINGS

ARE VERY GRACIOUSLY INSCRIBED.

C.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Author may be permitted to say, that these prose writings are not published with the thought that they will gain a free passage on the stream of Time, and go floating down to posterity amid the glimmering gleams of their own brightness ; or, that the writer shall have attained immortality without another move in the world, after the printer's last impress strikes these pages. They are published simply to gratify the earnest solicitation of friends, and to furnish the writer work until this mortal coil is shuffled off and the soul confronts eternal things.

The writer is aware that a fee simple title to fame is the priceless possession of but few,—few, indeed, as compared with the many who long to purchase, and who patiently urge on the weary pen, charmed by the sound of its own scribbling. It matters but little how gifted one may be, that one must have the patience to work and wait, investing a large amount of intellectual labor as the purchase-price of immortality, in the literary world.

Some are born to write, others learn to write, while more waste their mortal tenure without letting the world know they ever lived, by leaving

> A line to be read
> When they are dead.

Thus it hath been, so it is, and most likely will be, till Gabriel calls attention to the crowning day, and chaotic confusion reigns. Of course, each writer's writings will then be lost, but the soul will be the better for having left a read ble pen-mark on the ledger of life.

I have written to be out of idleness, and publish to give the critics work. There is a vein in my nature which finds enjoyment in reading a rich lampoon, e'en though its poisoned point pierce my heart. And, as a matter of choice, I would rather be wounded by the shafts of sarcasm, in the literary arena of life,

than forego the pleasure of seeing some egotistical bundle of brassy brain-work strut around lordly and lofty in his own estimation at having vanquished some timid quill offender on the field of Hard Fare.

Coarse-minded mortals may drill themselves until they become quite tolerable critics; but only those who possess the finer faculties of the soul can properly portray divine things, by dipping the pen of superior point into the celestial fount of God's love. A rude and careless hand may rough the canvass, but only the finer touch of genius can bring out the painting aglow with the light of paradise.

Some rays celestial may be found in these pages, some whisperings of the soul heard by ears attuned to heaven's melody, and some sorrow softly flow, which may, in part, obscure the imperfections visible herein. But if, when the reader shall have read and closed the book, one better thought remains, the author will be more than rewarded for this labor of love kindly submitted.

J. P. C.

Abilene, Kan., Nov. 9, 1887.

MERL OF MEDEVON.

In the Rocky Mountains, near that part of the same known as Central Park, lived, or lingered, during the latter part of the Eighteenth century, as the tradition goes, a specimen of the human family, known as Jepus Jarden, the white trapper, or by the shorter and less euphonious cognomen of "Jep" among his familiars. He was long seen in and about that region, with traps, dogs and gun, dressed in skins and furs of the finest tanning and most careful keeping. Death allowed him to remain unmolested for the space of near seventy summers and as many winters, so far as the writer has been enabled to trace his career.

He was a man rather above the ordinary height; straight and upright in the figure of his person, with a broad and intellectual forehead, an eagle gray eye, with a flowing beard of silvery whiteness (the latter part of his life) and curly flaxen hair, faded by the ravages of time. A merry twinkle played about his eyes, and a sort of half laugh upon his lips gave him a cheerful, friendly appearance, except when in conflict (and he had many of them) with the red men of hostile tribes, the dangerous mountaineers who roamed for booty, and the still more dangerous inhabitant of that wild region known as "the grizzly bear."

His dwelling place was a cave under a mountain cliff, known as "The Inaccessible Cliff of Medevon," hid by deformed mountain shrubbery in the summer time, and quite buried under the snows in the winter months. This habitation consisted of various neat, well-furnished rooms, stored with relics of the chase, trophies of the war-path, and precious gems culled from that rich region in various ways, which may be mentioned more particularly hereafter.

The sole companions of his lodge were an Indian woman, some twenty-five years of age when first taken to his lodge (he being then about forty), and her daughter, at that time about one year old. They were said to be of the Pawnee tribe.

The woman, or "Anda" as she was called, was of fair, very fair, complexion, with black eyes and a wealth of coal-black hair falling in long well-kept folds about her rounded shoulders. She was a woman of much more than ordinary intelligence, with a graceful physique and an expressive face.

The daughter, Merl, of much the same complexion, was still fairer formed and more beautiful than her mother. Indeed, she was frequently called "the beautiful Indian princess of the mountains." She was rather above the ordinary height of her sex, with a form and figure that at once suggested refinement and culture. Her eyes were large, dark, and liquid looking, with an expression of mildness hid in their deep mystery, such as the black-eyed houris of Paradise have gained from associations in that celestial land; her forehead was of nature's choicest mold, high and intelligent; her nose was of as delicate turn as that of any of the fair daughters of Eve, and her mouth was possessed of that witchery of expres-

sion which captivates at first glance the ardent admirer of beautiful women. Her long, dark tresses fell about shoulders and breast of peculiar loveliness ; her foot was as finely fashioned as that of any lady who never stepped from the drawing-room carpet to do aught of servitude, and light as the fawn's ; her dress was of the finest skins and softest furs, tanned and cured by skillful hands, ornamented in a lavish manner with diamonds, pearls, beads and trinkets of gold, which flashed in the pure atmosphere and sunshine of heaven, as she wended along the way-walks and mountain passes, for pleasure or for profit, or to study God in nature; for this child of the red man's was nature's child, and she felt herself related to its system of change and progression.

Of her father, nothing may be said at this time, for Merl had been kept, until her maturer years, quite ignorant of that father's fate, thinking that he fell, a chieftain battling for the Sioux Indians, when she was a child, for so her mother had intimated, although she never had, in direct words, said as much. It was known to Merl, at a very young age, that the Sioux Indians were hostile to the Pawnees, and hence very slight misdirection caused her confiding mind to cling to the belief that the father, whom she had never seen to remember, had fallen, as many victims had done, by the tomahawk or the scalping knife.

One misty looking sunset, in the fall of the year 1769, or thereabout, Jep and Anda might be seen carrying a child (then little Merl), by turns, wrapped in furs of otter, along the valley and winding ridge-way that led to "The Inaccessible Cliff of Medevon"—inaccessible to any foot save Jep's and those sharing his lodge.

The trapper seemed to step with a confident tread,

as though he knew the ground; and well he might, for nearly his whole life, from boyhood up, had been spent in the wildest mountains of the Rocky Range, the deepest gorges and the most secluded passes of the broken bosom of the Western World. Prior to Anda's coming, he had occupied this inaccessible lodge in the cliff, at intervals, during the recent winter months, and familiarized himself with its surroundings. Anda had never been there before, but they walked on as confidential friends walk earth's ways and windings through. In his strong arms he carried the child most of the way, while three faithful looking dogs, of the hound species, followed, with becoming decorum, as if trained to know their place and to appear well therein. Anda carried the trapper's rifle and other accouterments of the chase.

Slowly they wind up and on through narrow defiles and mountainous gorges, where tangled fern and hazelwood cover a blind and secret path-way leading to the lodge.

Although the eye may not follow their windings, or take cognizance of all the steps necessary to gain that cliff, they are there at last and settled comfortably for the evening and indeed, for that matter, for years in the trapper's lodge, which no ordinary capacity for comfort and enjoyable things had fitted up.

Supper is prepared by the trapper's hands, out of an ample supply of provisions purchased by Jep and laid in the lodge a few days prior thereto; for, although he could shoot at roe or doe or death-daring devil with a deadly aim, yet he was equally as handy in the pastry line of such a life, as any cook of the gentler sex could have been. Anda assists and looks upon his skill with an eye of satisfied composure and confiding contentment, while little Merl sleeps peacefully on a cot of skins before

a cheerful fire of the old-fashioned chimney kind. There was a large and friendly looking cat of the domesticated sort purring on the hearth, which consisted of flag-stones neatly arranged, as if by the skill of some artisan ; while around the walls, in proper order, were to be seen many trophies of the chase, reliquaries of Indian barbarism, as well as the most beautiful bead-work of that finely gifted race in this direction. These spacious apartments had been furnished in rooms of nature's mold (finely fitted and decked by the hand of art) in the very bowels of the mountain, with an entrance thereto so obscure and blinded that no curious eye had ever sought to penetrate therein, nor venturous foot to enter; and it was all the better for the trapper and his associates, for had they once been entered by others, and that intelligence been communicated to the outward world, much that was so valuable there would have been pillaged or rudely ransacked, against even the strong right arm of Jep and his deadly aim; for he never failed an offender to punish or a friend to reward, he never sped a bullet from that unerring rifle but to hit its mark.

So expert had he become from long years in these mountain defiles that had a hostile Indian, or a still more hated enemy of the white race, crossed his path at night, his eagle eye would detect the track in his morning tour to traps, to mines, to lawns where the antelope peace-fully fed, or to brightest lakes where the web-footed fowls of heaven were wont to gather amid the summer's prime for food or play, or where the mountain goat climbed the highest peaks and bounded free-footed and far from cliff to cliff.

This home in the mountains, this serene retreat, was also a kind of reading-room, for the tastes of its inmates

had furnished it with the best books of prose and poetry that could be purchased from Eastern booksellers, by original orders for shipment thither, by scouting parties, or laid down at a point on Bitter Creek known as "Lunday's Leghorn House," which was a kind of central trading station for all classes, who paid his price and kept their mouths shut in doing so, for it was customary in those days to charge a customer one dollar for speaking to him; now the shopman politely petitions the customer to be permitted to speak to him as to the quality of his goods and wares. So that, as the years sped on, little Merl became a great favorite of the trappers, and her mother spared no pains to educate her daughter, and to give her information as to the occurrences of the world without.

She was a great student, both of books and of nature. Some of her rarest lessons she would learn on a mild morning dawn or amid the evening twilight tide, with her painted bow and arrows, tipped with silver, strolling along some secluded, oft-frequented way, where birds of plumage bright perched upon the foliage surrounding some tranquil lakelet's side or laughing lawn, where the mountain herds would nibble at her hand; for although she carried a bow and arrows, she never used them on any of the feathered songsters or members of the animal kingdom. She simply carried them as a sort of precaution against the uncourteous advances of some rough spirits, garbed in mortality, who strolled across that region in quest of game or painted for the war-path. But it was Merl's greatest wish and care to avoid sending an arrow at any form of man, even to protect her own safety, and she never did unless some perpendicular mountain wall barred her flight from an offending foe, for were there an escape-way, no foot was fleet enough to keep pace with hers.

On such walks, nature seemed to breathe to her half-angelic soul a diviner melody, in that hush of her wild-wood, than mortal ever heard amid the city's din or cultivated rural retreat. She often thought unseen mountain spirits accompanied her on her walks, and opened avenues, with golden keys, that communicated with the spirit world, whereby she caught glimpses of a beautiful city which duller eyes hath never seen. She frequently was called "Mild-eyed Merl," and many who had chanced to see her from a distance, sought nearer approach, but she always fled light-footed as the fawn or fleet as the roebuck bounding from crag to crag.

Her timidity and extreme beauty oft led adventurous wanderers to spend hours and whole days seeking to follow her footsteps and learn something more of the "Indian Princess." But vain were all delays for that purpose.

Some thought her a nymph, a naiad or a sprite, while others averred she was human, from having frequently seen her tracks in the snow or softened places around the lily pools where she loved to linger. And not unfrequently would pass some sentimentalist thinking of a drooping love at home, back in the East, and would catch a glimpse of this mountain nymph, amid the sunset's gold, straying by some lakelet's side, which seemed like shadow of an angel cast within the water's fall, so tranquil and so still. And not unfrequently did it happen that one glimpse of so much loveliness disturbed the dreamer and his fair dream of those at home, causing a tumult of passion to arise within his bosom, which the mad disappointment of her flight troubled the sorer.

For weeks, and even for months, some ardent souls have been known to forsake all other objects of life, and

linger secreted, as they supposed, that they might surprise and arrest her flight by physical restraint, could they only get near enough to do so. But vain was their stay, for some witchery caused her to avoid their bound; and if they obtained a momentary glimpse of that admired being who was tearing their souls asunder, it was like the glimpse which the mind's eye may sometimes catch of the passage of the dove of peace, amid the darkness of a dreadful day, or that inspired look the soul sometimes is permitted to take of the bright vistas of heaven, in the shortest possible time. So great, however, was their infatuation that they would go days without eating (save the few berries at hand) and sleep a kind of dreamful sleep, meditating about beauty budding into womanhood (for now she was something past sixteen), and this, too, on the hardest ledge of rocks or most extended cliff or exposed point of danger, in order to be at the place where they vainly supposed she would pass, ere the coming of Aurora tinted the hills with gold, and painted the hues of heaven on leaf and lawn, on shrub and blossom, on lake and dell, for the diviner witchery of mankind.

'She never was seen but that she was most beautifully arrayed, in tasteful costume, gilt with bead and gold work of rarest art. Strange, you say, that such a fair angelic form delighted to lose her life to the gay fashionable world, within those mountain defiles, which must be so lonely to the lovely? Nay, nay, it is not strange; for she walketh and talketh with the nine Muses, the heavenly choristers, and those spirits bright of the Eden land, which join earth's purest mortals as they walk in silent reverie amid the celestials, for be it known to you, my reader, that God's finest fibered souls on His footstool,

frequently walk in hallowed bliss by the side of some loved visitant from beyond the flowers and the blooms of earth.

Meantime, as the happy seasons went, gliding like silver mists before the sun's risen rays, Anda in the lodge pursued her domestic duties, making it a cheerful home for child and man to return to at the night-fall when the shade of the foreappointed shadow, which we all must enter, settles darkling round. Merl pursued her pleasure paths, for pastime and for the study of the great mystery which opened about her—of leaf and tree, flower and vine, ledge and lawn, bird and beast, lacking that intimate contact with mankind and their treachery, which might have turned her pure and innocent thoughts to thoughts of sin and guile.

The trapper, faithful to his trade, went his daily rounds, securing furs, and golden ingots from unexplored mines, beautiful moss agates and beads of amber from friendly Indians, with whom he exchanged his skins sometimes, obtaining all sorts of wonderful things for the adorning of his lodge and the gratification of its inmates. He bought books quite frequently, thereby adding to a well-stocked library of every variety for their mutual gratification and improvement. Indeed, around his home seemed to linger the blest spirits of peace and love.

Was he married to Anda ? say you. Not as modern marriages are made. Was he guilty of any improprieties in thus living there? If he was, the sin be his, which he shall answer for. But true it is, never was happier home surrounded by all the safeguards and restrictions of the law, which, in its rigid formality, sometimes chills all the love out of our homes and causes the heart to droop and pine for an object on which to lavish its

friendly affections. That Anda and Jep were the best of friends, having that mutual confidence and strange esteem for each other that would have led either to sacrificed their lives for the other, is a truth beyond contradiction; and that Merl was loved and beloved by both is also true, she loving her mother as a dear dutiful daughter should do, and the white man, Jep, as truly as ever a child loved a father, for he was the soul of kindness to her. Merl had never known any other father save the trapper. Her own father passed from this earthly career before she was old enough to realize the fact or remember his features. How could law and civilization have improved such a home? And yet it is the law, administered in a civil age, that does improve our homes.

Jep's life was a pleasant one in the lodge, on the chase, and while tending his traps; but not always so pleasant when hostile hands were raised against his, out from the shelter of home, either by the red man or some hated white enemy ; for lives were taken and blood was spilled by his strong right arm and unerring aim.

Bloody and desperate, indeed, were his conflicts with the Sioux Indians, the Cheyenne Indians, the Cherokee Indians, and the Arapahoe Indians, as well as now and then some straggler from another tribe.

In short, the Indians as a race, wherever Jep's name was named, at once indicated a deep-felt hatred, and a revengeful malice toward the white trapper. And why shouldn't they ? But of this hereafter. Anda's dead chief had rendered signal service to their tribes in his lifetime, which, by a combination of strange coincidences, terminated that life, so that whenever one of the tribes mentioned crossed his path, there was strife, strife unto death. And the stranger it may seem because of the kind

countenance, and domestic benevolence of Jep. He was, indeed, a friend in peace, but a worse than enemy in war, when a painted imp stood before him in hostile attitude. On such occasions all his gentleness left him with the speed of a lightning's flash, and the terrible malignity of an awful nature asserted itself. He had, on many occasions, lost his life, remote from friends, were it not for his superior courage, agility, and unerring stroke.

Not like his enemies of the war path, did he resort to the barbarous custom of scalping fallen victims, and wearing the bloody trophies as so many badges of honor; for had he done so he would have been loaded down with the many scalps which were his of right. But often to Indian eyes was seen the fearful work of Jep's quick knife, or the devastating ravages of his deadly aim, on some fallen chief of great renown or a brave warrior; for he scorned to aim at a dull, dead mark, and always selected a shining one, "the better to nerve his heart for conflict," as he would say. In conflict, desperate and deadly, he seemed sustained by the warlike spirit of Mars, for no foe could long stand before his activity in dealing death to dastard that crossed his path. He was known near and far as "the deadly white Jep," and he moved with a cautious, cat-like step in coming and going.

For weeks, at times, he would not return to his lodge, when desperate work was to be done. But Anda and Merl knew he would be back, for he bore a charmed life, and no combinations of deadly hostility could stay him in his path. Indeed, his fame was such that the Indians believed "the great spirit fights with Jep," and the commonalty of them shunned him, except now and then when some leader, bolder and braver than the rest, sought to wreak vengeance for some fallen friend, or, when numbers of

them would plan and plot to take his life by acting in concert.

He wore no coat of mail or shield of defense. His defensive and aggressive armor consisted in a steady hand and a true eye and desperate activity when Death draws his dagger.

Many, very many, times had he rescued his life on the edge of the death line from some giant grizzly bear's embrace, only by the most superhuman efforts and undaunted bravery indeed. It seemed that Jep was not born to die by nature's dogs or her animal kings in those days; whose history, if preserved and properly penned, would present a thrilling record for posterity to peruse.

It is from rumor only and tradition's treasure-house that the writer has gathered sufficient data concerning Jep and the inmates of his gilded lodge to weave this web of darkness, interspersed with threads of silver and golden trimmings of truth, that from oblivion's record, dead and dying as it is, the author has been able to gain information concerning "The Beautiful Indian Princess, Merl of Medevon," to set forth in a feeble way some of the graces, goodness, and rare accomplishments of this dark-eyed lady, born of as royal blood as any of her fair-faced sisters.

When her song, at eventide, floated out on the stillness of a dying day the very birds ceased their melodious strains, thrilled with the music of her soul ascending to the gates of God. Her voice was of seraphic mellowness, with a cadence as pure and finely modulated as ever musician possessed, and a rich sweetness of surpassing rareness. She played the lute with tender touch, which always called Love's fairies around her, with their quips and quirks, and shining wings, grown golden in the rays

of the fading day. She was the possessor of such a wonderful musical talent that it gave her a sort of charmed queenship over the birds of the air, and all the harmless forest kind; for very many times she would strike a strain that would call the feathered warblers about her, and set the assembled goats, antelopes, elks, rabbits, squirrels, and all the fairy kind moving in an ecstacy of delight.

Those sweet concerts never brought a tiger, grizzly or any harmful animal there. And was a human foot approaching, stealthily from the cover of some secluded path, she seemed to possess the divining thereof, and would wave her assembled auditors back to the forest again, retiring in silence from the place, which bewildered the intruder all the more; at hearing the distant cadences of her song or harp echoing and re-echoing through the canyons and up the gulches, over the mountain peaks away.

Oft repeated efforts, on the part of some local trappers and *quasi* settlers, failed to gain any vantage ground where they might gloat, with greedy eyes on the coveted fair one, so that they had wisely desisted from attempting a surprise, except on very rare occasions, indeed, when their longings to capture this Indian princess of beauty would get the better of their judgment and prompt them to action. But she was guarded by some Ariel kind, and always sought safety in time to avoid their vigilance.

There was, however, one young cavalier, grand and honorable looking, whom her eyes had seen on several occasions, when her heart but slightly prompted her will to flee.

He was her senior some two or three years, tall and well formed, with light colored wavy hair, a moustache somewhat of the auburn hue, mild hazel eyes, and a clear, well

defined face, and with all, a bearing such as no lady of the King's court had ever flown from, and many of them had Rodero Wilkson seen, for that was his name.

He was spending the summer season of 1787 in the mountains, simply for pastime and for pleasure, being possessed of fortune wherewith to indulge his wishes. He delighted in the chase, as all people of English descent do, and he had his hounds and hawk, well trained and under complete control. He sought for game, mostly of the feathered kind, which was somewhat distasteful to Merl, as she loved to look on the forest featherlings unharmed and in their native element.

As she had noticed his graceful bearing and manly beaming eye, she would say to herself, "How can such a light-hearted, kindly looking face take delight in seeing the warblers of the forest die?" But, with all, she was wont to retreat slowly when he approached, and like a true gentleman, that he was, he never attempted to follow her retreating steps.

Her visits to that part of the park, and of the grassy dells which surrounded lovely silver seeming lakes, became more frequent, and it seemed, too, that Rodero found game more plenty there; for hardly a day passed that she didn't get a glimpse of him, and he of her in that locality.

She thought he looked with admiring eyes; for she had read of love, if she never had before known the coy visitant, and somehow he seemed to be a true interpreter of nature, and the actions of her fairest forms; for he thought those dark, black, beaming eyes, expressed what Merl's lips had not found words to tell.

Reader, they were in love, deeply in love, and were seeking some incidental excuse to make the same more

fully known to each other—it came, as all such chances come.

One beautiful eventide, when she had been gathering lilies, in the light of the sun's departing rays, and when he had been musing of flowers and of fair things, they met by a little lakelet's side.

She didn't flee.

He didn't advance till answered, as he said, "Fair one who and what art thou?"

She replied, "Monsieur, my name is Merl."

He approached and took her by the hand, and there, reader, the first kiss of love was given and repaid; for there was nothing artful or coquettish in her nature; her soul had found its own true mate, and his the Eden dove of his search. That each belonged to a different race was not thought of, as a hinderance to the exercise of the pure affections of the soul; for angels gathered around them and Cupid's fairies were delighted then.

They talked of many things. She admired his hounds, his hawk, his gilt and sable sash. He thought her the most beautifully arrayed being that his eyes had ever beheld, in palace or in hall; and as to her features, they were divine, and her voice, though slightly, very slightly, modulated by the Indian dialect, yet it was sweet and finely accented and tender in the extreme; and carried with its very utterance a bewitching lisp of love, which set Rodero's soul aflame with the divine passion which the gods of ancient fable possessed in such an eminent degree when they became enamored of the daughters of men—when there was uninterrupted communication between earth and the fair fields of paradise, years and years ago.

They lingered till the shadows fell, on that first sweet

trance of love which we are wont to retain such vivid memories of through all of our subsequent lives. The dogs, impatient of delay, gave the first warning to that loving pair, that the night was setting in, by manifesting a restlessness which the skillful training of Rodero had taught them when danger or darkness was approaching.

They wend the path along, talking as only lovers talk, till arrived in the valley below the lodge, when Merl signified her wish to go thither alone. Rodero very graciously granted the privilege. He wouldn't intrude beyond her wish, for worlds, believing that where the wills are crossed, there vanishes Love and all his Cupids.

The tender words of parting said, and a promise passed to meet again; Merl wended the secret pathway to the lodge, and the young English cavalier journeyed to his stopping place, at the "Lunday Leghorn House," some distance down the mountain's brow. His heart was light, for love visions lighted it.

"You are late, my dear?" said Anda.

"Yes, mamma. I was studying the stars, and God's love messengers as they go up and down the golden ladder from earth to heaven."

No word of caution, no censure, no frowning of reproval was ever given to Merl by either inmate of the lodge: it mattered not when she came or when she went, for they believed her accompanied by unseen guardians of God's goodness, that would shield her from all harm.

The trapper, in from a wearisome jaunt through mountain defiles, tangled tarns, and o'er lofty table-lands, they spent a pleasant evening together, reading, romping, and chatting, as domestics do where no reserve or cold formality is found.

To look in upon that group, amid the quiet of a lovely eventide, one would think them stray wanderers from the skies, alighted now on earth, for a little space, to rest their weariness, and to revive their love affections for each other. Indeed the cat, large, homelike, and kind, seemed one of them, and never strayed away to vex himself, as many simple-minded felines do. Fox and geese, cribbage, chess, checkers, and cards were used, as well as many other little harmless recreations, which Merl's mirthful mind had suggested, were indulged in. And, when the parting hour came for retirement, Merl kissed her mother a sweet "good-night," and pressed Jep's hand in token of affection, which thrilled his manly face with a sort of love-light, glorious and grand, and as Merl donned her night apparel, and pressed the comforting folds of her couch, she said a prayer, which the angel keeping the gate of gold handed in to the Lord of the City Celestial with radiant countenance; and that Ruler of the skies dispatched, on noiseless wing, a heavenly-instructed messenger to bear the boon of peace to her breast.

Fair forms there are on earth, and beautiful pictures of home life, but none fairer or more beautiful than Merl's was as she lay amid the snowy folds of a stainless couch, in her own apartment, which, lit by the feeble moonlight rays, that fell through a skylight of transparent glass above, showed at once a taste and refinement in the beautifying of her rooms which so many of our homes lack.

Rich pictures, frescoed walls, softest carpets, and folds of rarest velvet fell about her there, with pictures of her own painting, which might have been envied by imperial painters of the olden time.

Merl was an artist, with all of her other accomplishments, of much beauty and delicacy of touch, and she

possessed numberless musical instruments, on which she performed divinely. The piano, the harp, melodeon, lute, and the tambourine, as well as smaller harmonics, were of her possessions. And oft she woke some holy flow of soul by the cadences which they discoursed under her trained hand.

But now she slept, absent from her harp, a beautiful, peaceful sleep, perchance dreaming of the greeting at the lake, the tender words of affection spoken by Rodero, and their mutual love.

She awoke just as Aurora was tipping the hills with gold and gracing the groves with the glory of her coming.

She went out into the balmy airs, and in joyful mood held a reverie, thinking of God, His angels, and the beauties of mountain, dell, and stream: hearing the songs of the forest warblers, and seeing the harmless furry kind that skipped about her pathway.

She returned, invigorated and refreshed, to exchange the kind morning salutations which the inmates of the lodge always observed, and to partake of a bountiful breakfast, prepared by the twain, who seemed as one in all their wishes, likes, and wants.

Hitherto, Merl's life had been joyful: she had never known disappointment, no cloud of sorrow had ever settled in the fair horizon of her hope, which beamed so brightly about her. But changes came, as they come to all things mortal, bringing regrets to those who don the habiliments of decay and dreariness to many minds ere the close of life, that seems so mirthful at its morn.

But 'change was not now in Merl's case. She was doomed to dream on of the brightness of earth for a time, and sip the pleasures of love from that bewitching chalice stirred by a divine talisman: for she and Rodero often

met, lingering long ere the parting, and loved as none but lovers do. He found that a strong passion had possessed his breast; she found that the fount of love had been stirred to its very depths, and soon they learned that it would be dangerous and deathly to cease to love each other, or to strive against the holy passion, given by God to turn mortals of different sexes to each other.

The days sped on, the months ripened into seasons; for now, Merl was a beautiful, stately lady of twenty years.

Rodero, true as ever lover was, had spent much time with Merl, and they, long since, had pledged the plighted word, and now had come the season for their nuptials—yes, for their nuptials; for, reader, as wild a passion will possess the human soul for fair forms of a different race, as for those of its own, and, indeed, some times more so.

A grand wedding had been arranged for at the lodge; everything was in readiness for the occasion. No guests were to arrive, it is true, save a holy friar of God, who administered to weary pilgrims wherever he chanced to pass them by; and he was sworn to secrecy, and, as a further precaution, he was not to be admitted farther than the outward entrance to the lodge; for the splendors of the palace within might tempt the cupidity even of a pilgrim on the pathway to the eternal world, might excite the avarice even of a liveried saint of the celestial line, and cause the sandaled feet of righteousness to stumble and to fall by the way.

The morning dawned fair and beautiful. Merl was arrayed more gorgeously than she had been in all her life before. She waited, expectant for his coming.

The friar was there at the hour of nine A. M. exact; but Rodero, the expected bridegroom, came not. Merl grew impatient. What could it mean?

Ten o'clock came, no footstep approached, eleven and twelve ; she became frantic with alarm.

Jep tried to soothe her saying, " that some unforeseen delay keeps him, but he will soon be here." The old priest prayed and solaced by turns, with the assurance that " God doeth all things well." Anda tried to comfort her child, as mothers do, but in vain ; she persisted that she " had seen a vision, but a few hours since, in which two stalwart, soulless, Sioux Indians, had basely murdered her Rodero on his way to her bridal bower, and now he lies stark and dead without a friendly hand to brush the death damp from his brow."

Alas for Merl, her vision was all too true ; for Jep, hastening away to make search for the missing bridegroom, found him stark and dead at the base of the cliff, within half a mile of the lodge, shot in the breast with an arrow ; throat most fearfully lacerated, and " scalped as the red dogs always do their work."

Jep bore the cold corpse to a secluded shelter, and there covering it with Rodero's own mantle, hastened back to the lodge, saying to the man of God, " We will have no need of thee to-day; Rodero hath been basely murdered ; the body lies in the cypress grove by the spring; haste thee, holy friar, to the village, and see that the body is properly buried, while I avenge the atrocious deed."

The good dervis wended from the outer porch, crossing himself with " God's will be done," and a solemn " amen."

The trapper went into the lodge where he found Merl as pale as death. She read in his very countenance the doom of her lover, for a cloud of vengeance had settled on his brow which was fearful, and most awful in its gloominess.

Merl was the first to speak. "I knew it. Where did they kill him?"

Jep answered: "At the base of the cliff, and as God lives, they shall die before a trap is tended or an act of kindness done. I know their mark, and well have they left it on his lacerated form." The last words were lost to Merl's ears, for she had fainted almost to death, and had been borne to a lounge by Anda. The trapper kissed her, bade "good-day" to Anda and left the lodge with dogs and gun, three in number; they sallied forth on a terrible hunt.

Jep's first precaution was to go to the spot where Rodero had been killed, at the base of the cliff, and take his bearings.

He spent some time there examining the ground, the grass, the leaves, and all within the range of his eye. Then, seemingly satisfied, he cautiously started, as trappers start on the trail where desperate game is to be sought.

The dogs, obedient to the motion of their master's hand, followed, one behind the other, with a cat-like step. He was on a fresh trail, a trail made by two Indians only a short time since, and, should he overtake the game, his good rifle would dispatch the leader "Talaqua," (for Jep knew his mark), and his two never failing revolvers, of six good loads each, would send his chosen brave to the borders of "the happy hunting ground" without warning or preparation, other than a fair fight, for Jep loved to be manly even in the death strife.

The trail ran toward the Sioux country, which was then the Black Hill region, lying east and north of Central Park.

The hounds were strong, athletic, and fleet of foot, and true as ever dogs were to the will of a master.

The Indians were of that race who are large, sinewy, and strong, so that Jep might not hope to overtake them, for some days did they continue their course uninterruptedly, and they were likely to do so, for well they knew the avenging hand of Jep would be raised against them, but, armed as they were, with bows and arrows, tomahawks, and scalping knives, and two against one, they didn't greatly fear him; and, at night, one could sleep while the other kept watch without any fire, while Luna, queen of night, held reign over the wilds of the Indian as well as the haunts of civilized man.

Not so with Jep, he was alone and if he slept no human sentinel remained at his post, but there was a watcher "Bango" the leader of the three hounds, that never failed to alarm him when danger was at hand; and "Dingle" and "Dip," his companions, were equally vigilant when a foe was approaching; so that when the darkness settled down upon them, Jep wrapped his hunting-cloak about him and sought a night's repose on the bracken, which was interrupted at times; but, in the main, he felt refreshed as he pursued the trail, when the earliest streak of light in the East allowed.

He found, after two hours' walk, where the pursued had camped for the night; so that he judged they were then some six or seven miles in the advance, and that, by superhuman effort, he might be able to overtake and leave their "pesky hides" outside of the Indian village to which they were fleeing. So he increased the rapidity of his steps.

Bango, Dingle, and Dip raised their ears and followed at a brisker step. Jep's strides were hurriedly but cautiously taken, for he felt the thrill of revenge pulsating in his breast.

The forenoon passed ; Jep stopped not for food or rest, but kept on at an increased pace till near the middle of the afternoon when the dogs became quite impatient and Jep discovered that he was in the vicinity of the game. So leaving the trail and taking a ravine, around to the right, he sped away like the wind, in order to head them off and meet them face to face, and not strike a foe in the back.

For some three miles he continued in this way, when, suddenly turning to the left, he bore in the direction of the trail of the retreating Indians, but crossed it not ; so that now he knew he was in advance of them and he prepared his weapons for use ; raising his finger to Bango, in a cautioning attitude, they paused for the first time since the morn, in the shelter of some mountain shrubs, not far from the foot-hills approaching the plains.

Here they waited but a few minutes when Jep's quick eye beheld the red devils approaching, Talaqua in the rear, the brave ahead.

With nerves of iron and breast of steel, Jep waited till they were within five rods of his concealment, then, instantly stepping out, he shouted, "Draw, red devils, Jep's eye is on you."

Quick as a flash their arrows were at their bow-strings, but Jep's more hasty rifle brought the brave to earth with a ball in his breast and his revolver crippled the right arm of Talaqua, who rushed with the tomahawk in his left hand like an infuriated fiend on his foe, and, perchance, had dispatched Jep, were it not for the dogs, two of which were holding the wounded brave down, while the other (Bango) sprang at the Indian's throat and felled him to the earth in an instant, when the shining knife of Jep sent his treacherous soul over the river of Rakes which the wicked Indians cross.

The dogs had torn the brave's throat so that he died in a few minutes.

Jep said, in a subdued tone, "poor Rodero, thy death is avenged. Merl, I've kept my oath."

He lingered long enough in pensive mood, musing over the fallen Indians, to know that they were dead. Then he said, "Talaqua thou hast often crossed my path; the mark of thy terrible tomahawk hath become familiar to my eye, which thou hast so often left on the fallen victims of thy hate. Many, very many times, hast thou sought to intercept my steps and bar my way with death's avenging stroke, but never have we met before in deadly strife, nor shall we meet again until we meet at the judgment bar of God, and He be Judge between us there."

So saying, he turned him nearly round and took the backward course, but not the exact line which he had come, for fear of meeting other foes which this day's work might have put upon the trail.

He wended on till night-fall, when, discovering a mountain goat at a convenient shot, he felled it.

Hastening thither, it soon furnished a feast for the almost famished dogs, as well as ample for the trapper's repast, which his hasty knife had severed, and which he had retained. He waited till the dogs were through with their evening meal and then bent his steps onward to a gulch where he found some ledging rocks that would conceal a fire from unfriendly eyes.

Here he soon had his venison broiling over a cheerful little fire of coals. An ample supper supplied the trapper's needs, he withdrew from the fire some distance and laid himself down to rest.

He soon fell asleep and slept as peacefully and as innocently as one at home who hath never known what sin or murder is.

His faithful dogs kept watch, and, about three o'clock in the morning, Bango's low moan of alarm, close to the trapper's ear, brought him instantly to his feet with his accoutrements on, for he never took off his trappings when on the trail or track of death.

His hasty hand grasped his ready rifle, and, with the speed of the wind, man and dogs flew up the mountain side seeking shelter from five red devils who were discharging arrows at the retreating form which, somewhat favored by the darkness, remained uninjured.

Jep, turning, sent the foremost of the gang to his long home by a shot from his trusty rifle, which raised a howl as from the damned in hell.

On, on and on, in the race of death, he flew, loading his rifle as he went, which soon tumbled another from a cliff to the gulch below, as dead as death is. This was repeated till but two were left, they began a retreat in much confusion.

Jep commenced the advance. The order of things was reversed; only a few more flying steps were taken when a fourth Indian bit the dust at the unerring crash of Jep's rifle. The fifth and last one of the gang had sense enough to know that flight was death, and that to resist could be no more, so he wheeled on a kind of angle, thereby intending to encounter Jep with his tomahawk; but the agility of the trapper was too much for him, for, although they were not more than three rods apart, the moonlight gave the trapper's trained eye a hasty sight over the barrel of one of his revolvers which was as deadly as was his rifle but not as sure of aim.

This was no stray shot. It did its work well. The fifth and last Indian had gone to be judged by the Great Spirit of the happy hunting grounds.

But hardly had Jep's last unerring aim been effectual when one of the fallen foe, whom Jep felled on his hasty run and whom he had supposed was dead, which lay within six foot of where the trapper stood, with the activity of a fiend of hell, sprang to his feet and gave a fearful leap towards Jep, bringing down his scalping knife with the lightning-like stroke of lurid electricity, and which had terminated the earthly career of Jep, the blow was so well aimed at his breast, had not his ever trusted Bango sprang and fastened his long white fangs on that red arm of destruction and averted the blow by a downward side-like motion which gashed his own shoulder quite

The Indian fell with the force of the blow, and Jep, with deadlier malice in his soul than before, raised his rifle to brain him with the butt end thereof, but he discovered, ere bringing down the gun, that the Indian was gasping his last.

It was his dying sigh and death-struggle. He lies silent now.

Bango was Jep's next care. To stanch the blood and close the wound was soon accomplished, for it was not fatal or very dangerous but quite painful, as the moaning of the noble animal attested.

Jep's next precaution was to retrace his steps and examine the ghastly trophies of his warfare, to ascertain if life was extinct in each body of the five victims of his hand, but to remove no apparel therefrom, for he held it "mean to rob a dead man."

He approached each victim cautiously under the moon's rays, but well might he have been more bold, for each was sleeping the sleep of eternal silence to this world that knows no waking until Gabriel, on that celestial morn, will call all races and kinships up for judgment.

When the last stiffening corpse had been viewed, Jep broke forth in these strange words :

"Red dead dogs this is the ending of what was begun in other days. Bring on your miscreant hell hounds, you'll find a desperate devil here and a warm reception while my powder and lead remains, and, when they are gone, this trusty blade of silvered steel will find supreme delight in parting your dastard entrails. Many a red dead dog lies along my pathway from that gloomy morn, which the veil of obscurity hangs so securely over in mercy to fugitives, and many more shall occupy a like resting place if you will but present yourselves for Jep's attention, and the Eternal of days will lengthen out this loved life of mine. I must have done ; day is coming and all there is of my dead auditors are busy with the cares of the spirit world where my crude accents will hardly interest your doings enough to cause a pause at their delivery. Take this, however, as a parting salutation to your unshriven souls, while there's one of your race remains, Jep's hand, and that of his kindred marksmen, shall take peculiar delight in breaking the red hide which Nature gave you, for the escape of that devil loaned by your king, grim Pluto, for the vexation of God's image here."

Having ended, he turned once more toward the lodge.

His progress was slower than he was accustomed to move, because of the lameness of his trusty dog, Bango ; but they made tolerable headway, so that, with frequent stops and stays, in the small hours of the second succeeding morning, they arrived at the cliff of Medevon, without further interruption or mishap.

There was a light left burning for Jep ; and no sooner had the open door announced his coming, than Anda was

at his side, with a wild expression on her countenance, saying: "Merl is sick with fever, near unto death."

Even so Jep found it, for they were at the side of her bed in an instant.

Her mind wandered in delirium so that she did not recognize the trapper.

They held a hurried consultation. Jep prepared a mixture which he administered before caring for his own comfort, or that of the dogs.

She slept, but her breath came very slow, almost imperceptible at times. Anda sat by the bedside, while Jep refreshed himself and the dogs from a well-filled larder.

Anda and Jep talk in confidential tones apart. They return and spend the night at the couch of the sufferer, soothing, comforting and administering remedies, such as more skillful hands might have given with less favorable results. Through the silent hours of the night, they watched the fever's progress, tremblingly, at times, for her soul seemed hovering on the brink of the eternal verge, preparatory to its taking that erratic flight forever.

Merl seemed to cease breathing, at times, altogether, and then she would revive again.

The sleep of the dogs was broken and restless, dumb animals as they were, still, they seemed to realize that sorrow was in the lodge, for the slightest expression of grief on the face of Jep was a record which they read with the rapidity of an intuitive glance.

Just before morning, at the hour of the darkest gloom, there came a change, at first for the worse, then for the better. The patient opened her eyes, and looked with that mild expression of contentment which may have been suggested by the presentation to her spiritual eye, the soul of Rodero robed in the texture of that paradisal

clime where the saints of God are in waiting and ever are sounding harps and harmonies of holiness.

Soon her eyes closed and she seemed to rest more peaceful.

At eight o'clock A. M., there was a marked and visible change for the better, so that Anda went and laid herself down on the lounge for a little rest from her faithful watching.

Jep, like a true minded soul, that he was, lingered at his post through the forenoon, until Anda's return, and then went and dressed the wound of Bango, poor animal, who was suffering much therefrom.

Days and nights of patient and weary watching went, and wore into weeks, before Merl had sufficient strength to leave her bed, and when she did do so, she seemed like a spirit from some softer sphere, clothed in robes of immortality, so changed and seraphic-like her brow.

But, by degrees, the bloom returned to her cheek, as the season wore away.

She hadn't, as yet, gone forth alone. The birds had missed her much, and, when she did, even they noted a difference in her once cheerful mood. Jep had told her the whole truth respecting the plot of the murderous Talaqua, the death of Rodero, the doom of the Indians, and the wound of faithful Bango.

She grieved and grieved, day after day, longing to go and place some flowers on the grave of her dead lover, but they, as fugitives, must be discreet, and not go into public where prying eyes would find them out. If she sought his grave, it must be under the light of the moon when no human eye could see her going thither or returning thence again. There would be no moon for some ten days, and so she must content herself as best she could

for the present, as the days come and go, with the birds and little beasts, which seemed to regard her differently since the cloud of her grief fell so darkly in the bright horizon of hope; but more tenderly, if anything; for her caress seemed softer and her voice more angel-like.

God's ways are not man's ways; and, perchance, it was wisely decreed by the Ruler of heaven and earth, that sorrow should soften the souls of His brightest angels here below, for the greater enjoyments in the beautiful land of Eden, beyond the delectable hills, whose glow seems golden in the sunlight of God's grand splendor which breaks so beautifully over the borders of the celestial lands whose hill-tops are tipped with gold.

Merl was gentle indeed before her great sorrow, and stepped with a harmless tread, but now, she shunned the worm in her pathway, and avoided the bringing of a startling flutter of excitement to the breast of any bird or beast by her sudden and unexpected coming.

In the meantime, she grew stronger and more resigned to her sorrow, spending a good portion of each day out of doors reading Milton's "Paradise Lost," Moore's "Lalla Rookh," Byron's "Corsair," God's golden thoughts from the Bible, and other beautiful writings of prose, poetry, and fiction.

She had become a great scholar, having a retentive memory and being possessed of a meditative mood.

The silvery crescent of the moon began to enlarge, the evenings were balmy and mild.

She had gained a description from Jep, (who had gone forth and made search) of the grave of her lover and its whereabouts.

She had shaped a beautiful waxen floral form of the

cross of Christ which she concealed under her cloak, as she went forth one evening just before sunset, for a ramble, as was was her wont, among the hills.

The sun went down, the shadows of the night folded round; she was on the way to the grave of her dead lover, and nearly there. She had received a minute description of its location from Jep, and she feels no hesitancy in believing that she can find it without difficulty or danger from night marauders.

She is there at last and kneeling by its side.

She sent this soul petition to the absent spirit of her dead Rodero: "Oh! my lover in paradise, come hither a moment and meet me at your grave; this heart is breaking, and so lonely since you went away. Come and let our souls converse, if our bodies are doomed to separation now."

It was a picture such as painter hath seldom seen. Merl kneeling at the grave-side, with hands clasped in prayer, face upraised to heaven, amid that silvery moonlight sheen, breaking in floating particles around, and the gentle zephyrs moving her tresses, so loosely combed and kept, (since her great grief) falling about her there.

She remained some minutes bowed, and then rose and placed the floral cross on the head of the grave with some flowers of fair perfume, neatly arranging them. Then she stood silently looking at the mound which held all of the mortal remains of her idolized one. And she wondered "why God could see that this is best."

As she stood amid her silent reverie, she seemed to feel the rustling of angels' wings fanning her fevered frame, and to hear their tinkling footfalls assembling around the grave, and out of the moonlight there, this celestial hymn

was sounded to the ear of her soul by the sinless seraphs assembled from paradise.

"Maiden, mortal, thou of earth,
Grieve not; for another birth
Will give him back to thee;
Where love knows no satiety,
And never wickedness mars
The seraph soul divine;
Beyond the world of stars,
Where meet the Muses nine."

The last soft sounds of the strain followed the silvery particles of mellow moon-shine out on the night air; and never hath mortal heard the symphonetic sounding of such harmonic chords from mouths of earthly mold.

Merl's mind was very susceptible, at this peculiar moment, to aught of the sublime and beautiful, and her soul drank in the harmonic cadences which fell from the lips of that celestial band, with all of the heavenly ardor which a new-born soul feels when first ushered into the joys of the paradisal clime.

There was a mild mellowness in the atmosphere, a subdued sheen, which seemed like silvery showers, floating from the moon's full face, and a peculiar peaceful lustre radiating from God's stars, shining sentinels along the parapets of heaven, which are nightly lit and replenished by holy genii's hands. The milky-way seemed more fleecy folden than she had ever seen it before, and the northern star glimmered like an intelligence from its aerial height in that part of the heavens above the dipper, to guide from danger mariners whose frail barks often enter those tempestuous seas at nightfall, which would be but a liquid grave were it not for the friendly rays of that star to guide them safely on their course; and,

lower down, just above the horizon, glowed and gleamed the auroral lights, which, to mortals, shed a lustre perchance, not unlike the rays of the heavenly halo which breaks around the outward walls of paradise, on enraptured eyes, as they gain the first glimpses of that glorious land whose minarets are tipped with silver, and whose streets are golden, and whose sparkling waterfalls wake music's melody as they mingle with the incense-freighted breeze, wafting seraph sounds from the celestial harps the angels bright are tuning.

It might have been hours that Merl lingered there. She took no note of time. Her soul was rapt in a heavenly reverie which she had never realized before; and once she thought she heard distinctly whispered from her Rodero's spirit lips, the words, "Meet me, Merl, in paradise."

And oh, the sweetness and the music of that heavenly-modulated voice, was balm, indeed, to her troubled soul; and faintly, she fancied, was echoed by the angel band, her answer, "Yes, yes, yes."

The last yes scarce moved the heavenly zephyr's breath that round her lay, but her spirit's ear caught the sound which thrilled her soul with a rapture of delight. Who shall say that angels, at such times, do not communicate to mortals some of the delights of that celestial sphere? For are they not related? Reader, methinks that heaven and earth are much nearer to each other than we are wont to imagine, or, at least, that there is a direct pathway where shining ones come and go, bringing solace and cheer in such hours as Merl spent at the grave of her lover.

It would seem to be a mournful place to ordinary minds, yet Merl thought it the very door of heaven, and she drank in the deepest delight while lingering there.

She seemed almost afraid to stir, least her mortal tread should drive away those mortal moods of hers, and the immortal ones, which she was conscious were present and exerting that holy spell about her.

Surely, if unseen visitants from the celestial world can make this earthly sphere so near like heaven, especially the grave-side of the departed, what joys will not break upon the enraptured soul to be one of them, and to "see as we are seen?" Blessed thought; holy conception; divine foreshadowing. Our mortal minds but faintly catch a shadow of the bliss that is to be, of the beauty of the mansion house which He is building, of the exquisite delights of a deathless day in that "City whose builder and maker is God." It might be the more heavenly on earth, than it is, if we mortals would allow the better impulses of the soul to make glad this span between two eternities, this station for a time, this "tent on the beach" of the shoreless ocean of eternity.

It might have been the middle of the night when she turned to depart, for Venus had gone down, and the moon hung low in the horizon.

After going but a few steps, she turned and looked long and silently at the grave, then up in the sparkling dome of God's universe quite steadily for some seconds; then she moved her hands in graceful seeming, as if pronouncing a silent benediction on the grave of her lover; and as if taking a farewell of the celestial hosts which she knew were wafting their adieus adown the glory-lighted sky.

E'en the sound of her returning footfalls seemed to jar on the sacredness of the scenery about, but it may have been imagination, for her soul was full of divine pictures and celestial pulsations.

She wended back as she had come.

Finally gaining the lodge, she lifted the latch and passed lightly in, and repaired to her bed without question or correction from any one.

Soon she is in slumbers sweet, with the guardian angel standing by her bedside.

Her sleep seems restless, for once she half raised herself in bed to a sitting posture and held out her hands in seeming attitude as if about to receive the spirit of her Rodero back from the celestial walk-way which it had been wandering; and then she fell back upon her pillow with a faint moan of disappointment and sunk into a profounder sleep.

It was late, for her, when she arose — about seven o'clock in the morning — yet she seemed refreshed from her broken night's rest.

She hastily donned a befitting apparel and went into the sitting room, where Anda was busy with some fancy bead work that the rays of the morning light sparkled on.

The usual greeting passed, Merl said, "Oh, how beautifully those pearls of amber gleam in God's sunlight."

"Yes, Merl," answered her mother, "the Great Ruler of the world was particularly solicitous in fitting up this sphere for the abode of man, that the beautiful should cheer him."

Such conversation could hardly have been expected in a trapper's lodge, in a secluded mountainous region, where civilization and art seldom enter. Yet, every word exchanged in that lodge savored of sublime sense and most devout sentiment, and was as appropriately selected as had its inmates been at the head of a college or ladies' seminary of learning.

Jep was away on the morning hunt, and returned not,

till Luna, queen of night, folded her darksome robes over mountain, lodge and gorge. But when he came, he was delighted to see Merl looking so well ; and she met him with the generous smile and open hand of friendship, which one only sees between sympathetic souls whose affections move in mutual flow.

They passed a pleasant evening; somewhat like the happiness of former evenings. Merl became much delighted at times, but it was evident from a close observance, that the hilarity of her spirits was caused by great effort on her part, for, ever and anon, would come a lull, and she would sink back, quite unconsciously, to a deep, thoughtful mood, which was only broken by firm resolve and great will power.

Anda and Jep both noticed this. It was quite apparent to them that she was laboring to conceal the real troubles of her soul, and to seem mirthful as of old; but it was hard, exceedingly hard, as it always is, to put on a gay external when the internal is blighted to the core.

In the death of Rodero, this finely fibered soul, this earthly angel, this beautiful flower of the mountains, had sustained a grief, deep seated and destined to be of life-long duration; for such susceptible, harmonic natures can not be thus rudely jarred and give forth the same seraphic melody and saintly sunshine as before; for, below the surface, are forebodings and fears that this life may end all, and be the bound of all, and, in that event, the soul may never meet departed, worshiped ones on a higher shore, where the love Cupids of God's golden-shafted groves may never be driven away at the approach of shade or shadow; where the full fruition of love's harvest may be reaped and kept through the long diurnal of an endless

day; where the sainted psalms of heaven raise the soul to the sublime raptures of ecstacy and bliss; and where the gods are circled round by multitudes of shining ones, all glorious in their spotless apparel, with crowns polished by the architectural workmanship of Jehovah's finishing touch.

To be shut out of such a place, Merl reasoned, would be a doom which she dreaded, oh, so drearily.

In the course of her extensive readings she had read some skeptical works (who has not?) which she did not believe, but which served to raise such thoughts in her mind. She deemed the fate of the skeptic more marvelous and unenviable than that of the lowest animal in all God's animal kingdom; for the animal is, apparently, content with the life he lives, but to the ear of the skeptic every rustling leaf must be a parable of painfulness, as he reads in its death the foreshadowing of his own inevitable doom; for his creed would mix the elements of his own immortal soul with the filth of cast-off nature forever, in that dreamless state of inactivity where Nothingness holds reign.

It was only occasionally that such thoughts would disturb the serenity of her belief in the future state. And when her mind regained its wonted equipoise, her faith in the sublime creed of Christ was stronger, surer and truer than before.

She loved the Lord's blessed book, and loved to glean lessons of glorious grandeur from nature's vast and varied storehouse. And, though a great sorrow lay on her soul, which seemed sinking her mortal tenement beneath its weight, yet she was sustained and supported by the blessed words of consolation, derived from a patient and continued perusal of the great lessons of life and love,

as taught in the Holy Scriptures. She could hear the voice of God speaking in the tempest, and, to some extent, behold the might of His majesty, when those electric bolts of lurid flame shivered the mountain oak or tore the ledge of granite asunder. She often caught the sweetness of His consoling whispers when holding her reveries at the eventide hour, when no breath of air was stirring, and no sound in motion, save the wild swans and other web-footed fowls, as their snowy breasts broke the lake of silver sheen, where Rodero and she had plighted their love, with a fervency of promise that the historic angel of heaven must have recorded on the great ledger of life, for it was so unreservedly made.

Her's was a poetic soul and so finely organized that such scenes seemed the foreshadowing of the beauties of paradise. Surely this dark-skinned maiden was a stray soul of the celestial sphere, veiled in some earthly disguise ; for she passionately loved such scenes as celestial wanderers must love : namely, the sublime and beautiful, indeed there was a thread of saint-like seeming which ran through her nature, more sublime and divine than ordinary earthly natures possess. Even the smallest insect or tiniest bird, wren or robin, swan of down, or fleet-limbed deer, mountain goat, or furry-footed quadruped, found a tender, thoughtful friend in her ; and sometimes the little hidden flower, surrounded by moss and ferns would seem to raise its blooming lips in act to kiss her slender feet as she passed along.

She stood looking into the tranquil waves of the lake which lay like a shining sheet of silver before her. There, the eye of her angelic soul seemed to catch a glance of the city celestial reflected from its depths with all the beauty of delectable hills, golden streets and glowing parapets,

which falls on the enraptured heavenward wanderer's sight as the freed soul enters through "the gates ajar" that St. Peter guards so faithfully through all the interesting occurrences which happen without and within.

She seemed to see the same glorious vision of shining ones ascending and descending (which she had seen at the grave) along a glorious archway of light; with crowns, harps, and psalters in their hands, singing a subdued carol in accord with the melody of the "Chant Celestial" which the choristers of the city of God sing under that sweet musician Israfel all the day long; all the time through; all the eternity as it ebbs and goes, ebbs and goes, no nearer to an ending now than millions of ages past.

Merl seemed to be transported beyond the walls of paradise standing where her sympathetic soul drank in all the bliss of a bright spirit severed from its clay encumbering tenement. Even the wild fowls grew fonder and rested on the lakelet's margin almost motionless, as if afraid to break the silent reign of heaven on earth.

Once in a while, a glow more golden than the rest of the amber-lighted scene would break out of the ethereal mildness from the crowns of some brighter angels as they went speeding by; those, perchance, whose station is nearer the throne of God than others, where the lotus trees bend their waving branches in graceful sweep around.

Surely she was not far from heaven? So angel-like she had grown, and so holy was her being, and such a mildly, benign expression of countenance—it seemed that she was a visitant from that fair sphere.

It is but a step from earth to heaven. To such a being, the breaking of life's thread is but the slightest journey; but the exchanging of these earthly shores for the beauti-

ful paradise beyond. The missing of such ones here is but the realizing, to them, the shining things and the loves of that fair land, as soon as flown from this, for the crowning day will scarcely give such holy beings greater bliss than their souls enjoy when the "golden bowl is broken;" then their freed souls seek those celestial pathways which run circling round the out posts of heaven, where they, most probably, wait, instead of purgatory, where the priests would have them doing penance, through long years, the purer to purge their souls against the judgment day.

She wended back as she had come, in a deep musing mood; but frequently lingered to greet, with tenderest touch and mildest accents, some feathered thing or furry kind along the way.

The inmates of the lodge watched her coming and her going very closely with reference to the apparent change of habit and health.

They discerned "while she may be growing stronger, there is a settled expression of sadness on her face which is of the soul, and under which she is pining, daily pining, dreadfully pining, peacefully pining for paradise." These beautiful words were Anda's; and with much measurement did she utter them.

From frequent conversations on the subject, Jep had suggested to Anda "a change from the gilded lodge to another clime for the sake of Merl," and that faithful soul, her mother, would, like a true woman, make any sacrifice for her daughter's comfort or Jep's contentment.

On several occasions, of late, the thought had been suggested to Merl, who would reply, "I want to go where he is; can you take me there?"

Ah! trusting, confiding words. Poor child, none but

a spirit guide could point her to his bower in the land where the immortals are, over a very different way than that to be pursued by Anda and Jep with the view of saving her life, for it was very evident to them that a continued visitation to the places and the scenes where Merl and her lover had walked, and talked, and loved together, and the loneliness they suggested to her soul since his absence, could but terminate in their loss of her, which would be the severest blow of affliction that ever fell upon either, and they twain had had their share of severe blows in the years gone by.

So it was arranged that, in the mild sunny days of the next opening spring, they would leave the gilded lodge on a kind of pilgrimage, going south and somewhat east, to where? Ah, they didn't design that any one should know.

Time wore on apace. The day for their departure had at length arrived. The same settled sadness fell on the features of Merl. She had known of their plans for the future and yielded to their wishes. But, in the meantime, she had gone and taken a final adieu, a last sad farewell of her Rodero's grave, shrouded by the wing of night from eyes too sinful to look on so pure a being.

It was indeed a sad adieu, for she realized that she was going out into the wide, wide world to try and forget that grave and the silent inmate sleeping there, and all of the associations and surroundings that preceded its making. But it was only to try. She never could forget that mound or its sleeping occupant. That history was a part of herself. A portion of her soul seemed to be lying in that grave, sorrowing in a saddened state. Oh, cruel, cruel, such things are! Many a heart-rending scene we take leave of, along the mournful walks of life which lead to where our dear dead are sleeping, when cold comforters

stand around and the atmosphere is chill with the dews of death blown from his dreary mart. And, at such times, it seems as if we were leaving all the brightness of life behind for a future gloomy as the grave. But the just God of many worlds and systems of mighty magnitude has nicely planted the spring of joy within the human breast and sent His sweet angel of hope to guide us on to new friendships and other flowery paths.

So it was with Merl, to some extent. That solemn leave-taking ended, she, once away from the grave and its surroundings, the lodge and its associations, the lakes and their loneliness, marred with the misery which she had borne by their reedy hems, since he met her no more there, gone on pilgrimage to an unknown land, unknown to her at least, once away from it all, she felt better, much better.

Bango's wound had long since healed. The bright moonlight spring evening of their departure had come. They, the fugitives, three in number, Jep, Anda and Merl, accompanied by Bango, Dingle and Dip, with the arms of warfare that Jep was accustomed to carry, Anda with a few trinkets which she prized, and Merl with her harp, wended out of that mountainous gorge, away from the "Inaccessible Cliff of Medevon," away from its gilded lodge, as silently and as unseenas they had come something over twenty years before, only that Merl was being carried then, and that Jep and Anda had greatly changed now.

Jep had grown grayer and was less athletic of step, and Anda had grown much more matronly in appearance, and the dogs were grown very old, for dogs, so much so that they presented a quaint, querulous appearance as they filed along behind the party ; but they had been faithful friends to Jep and he "would take them along."

They wended some distance, taking a southerly and eastern course, till arriving at a secluded place; here they encamped for the rest of the day; having resolved to "travel nights awhile as it would afford the better security till away from the range of Sioux Indians," whom Jep and Anda well knew were their most dreaded and mortal enemies among all the races of men.

Sad, indeed, it was to think of those fugitives, Jep and Anda, nearing the sunset of life, leaving their gilded lodge, theirs by right of prescription, for a wearisome pilgrimage, and most melancholy to realize that Merl was to leave forever all those loved haunts which had furnished such delicious draughts of soul food in the sunny summer of hope. But, then, cheerful it was to Jep and Anda to think that the sacrifice was being made with the view of saving the life of the brightest flower that ever bloomed upon mountain or lea. Sad it was to think of their leaving the gilded lodge of Medevon, with all of its accommodations for social enjoyment and intellectual culture, its treasure and its trinkets, never to come back, never to enjoy it more. Sad it was to think that that lodge, with its secrets of shining wealth, should remain for a half century closed to the world, and, when found and opened, that a ruthless band of red men should appropriate its shining contents and burn its valuable library, holding a war-dance around its dying flames, for such was the gilded lodge's doom fifty years after the fugitives had left it forever. But then, why not leave it when they left it? For they would, by the course of nature, be compelled to leave it sometime, and their going now was but a separation from its golden treasure only a short time sooner than the grim monster, death, would have demanded peremptory possession of its glittering trinkets.

Yes, we leave our lodges all over the land, shining as they are, whether we will or not, and they left theirs with some little consolation for they believed it secure in the bowels of the mountain where never human foot would climb or human hand scatter its contents.

Onward they wend like pilgrims, as they are, halting, eating, resting, sleeping day after day, week after week, month after month.

Thus traveling we trace their course down into the wild sandy lands of New Mexico. A few miles south of Dona Ana we lose their trail and track forever. The wind has blown away the last bit of their future history, from that time on, the accumulated dust of the ages has covered their footsteps and shrouded their taking off in mystery. No record remains of their doom, no lines of tender molding is inscribed on any monument to tell their destiny. In the sand regions of Dona Ana, New Mexico, their last mortal foot-marks were seen, their last camping place discovered of which any tradition or history remains. "They had gone from there," Delaqua, an Indian brave of the Arapahoe tribe affirms, for it seems that he was on their track, some hours behind, with the intention of doing them harm, and lost it at the place named to find it no more.

It may be, and most probably is the case, that on finding themselves pursued by a dreadful foe whose instinct and training was acute enough to track them on the land, they availed themselves of the angling curves of a small brooklet running south, wading its shallows for some distance; thereby baffling the designs of their pursuer, Jep not wanting to spill blood on their pathway, which would doubtless have raised the bands of half-civilized Indians about them, and thus have endangered the lives of Anda and Merl.

That they went on to some selected destination is quite evident, judging from all the circumstances surrounding the last encampment of which a record remains to tell.

This mysterious family had gone as they had come, enveloped in strange interest, but joined to each other with all the affections and ardor of which the human soul is capable.

Although Jep's hands were stained with blood, the best blood of many a victim, yet there is a true manliness in his nature, an honorableness of soul which commends itself to our approbation, and we like him unaware, for he was true as ever man was true to his friends, and as deadly an antagonist to his enemies as ever lifted a reeking blade or drew an unerring aim at a dastard foe. This man of such very contradictory combinations, of such a mildness of nature in repose, and such a torrent of scorn and deadly activity when aroused, was gone, gone, perhaps to a secluded spot with his two friends, whom he loved more than he loved life, to pass the balance of his earthly days in meditation, penance, for the many crimes which "the law of necessity," as he would say, compelled him to commit.

It is but fair to remember that that terrible shock received at first view of the soul-chilling scene, as he returned to his frontier home in ruins in Ohio so long before, was the cause of the subsequent life which he led, but whether or not that will be considered an extenuating circumstance at the bar above, is a problem which time alone may tell with unerring certainty. I know not whether Jep had gone to wend a peaceful path down to the grave, or to pursue the same deadly line of life with reference to his foes that the hates of years had settled so sorely in his soul. Charity would suggest the former, for

there was the safety of dear friends in his hands, without any trackless retreat, as of yore, to flee to, and the saving of his own soul against the day of deeds.

Anda's crime, if crime it was, debased not the purity of her truly affectionate soul, but seemed to have made her nature more loving and womanly than before its happening, for she was to others' happiness very attentive and solicitous; and Merl, like a gentle dove of peace, who never had known sin or sinful thoughts, possessing that pure ethereal soul-like spirit of her's, was lost to human history from this time on, but not lost, we trust, to the company on the coast of the celestial lands when she was called to go hence, for never was sod damp enough, or grass dank enough, or grave deep enough to hold such saintliness forever.

What was their crime, say you? Reader, years ago, in Jep's younger days, he had a loving wife named Lucy, who had been a mother for a year or more. The little babe, Barlow, was a bright-eyed, lovely boy, with its father's outward form and its mother's mild-eyed loveliness. He was a settler on the frontier of Ohio, tilling a small farm, hunting and trapping for profit and pastime; and had resided there for some three years, the balance of his life having been spent in the Rocky Mountains, as we have seen, where he was born and reared. He had gone to Ohio as a guide for an exploring party; there met Lucy, courted, married, and settled down to live happily; but alas, for human hopes.

The desperate Indian chief, "Dead Eye," of the Sioux tribe, led a band of six against his home, while away at his traps, murdered the mother with the tomahawk, hung the babe, Barlow, with a lariat line, to the limb of a tree near by; burned Jep's home to the ground, drove away

his horses and other domestic animals which he had gathered about him there, and retired from the scene of their villainy just as Jep was returning.

From under cover of the woods, near by, he beheld them go; but not their work of death and devastation.

Had he realized the extent of their dastard deed, it is more than likely that he had rushed upon the band, in his frantic desperation, and been killed in a frenzied attempt to avenge the blood of a murdered wife, which cried from the ground, and the strangled remains of a lovely infant son, then growing cold in death.

They went without observing Jep, and he shortly thereafter came over a little hilltop to discover the object of their visit.

Oh! heartrending scene; most terrible calamity; wife murdered, child strangled to death, and home burned; naught but desolation around; dreariness and devastation now, where lately life and love had awaited his coming.

Jep's stern, hard manhood bore it all till he beheld the lifeless body of his babe swing a ghastly spectre from that limb, speaking in unmistakable terms of the devilish barbarity of the red fiends, who, unbridled, roamed those Western wilds in the days of frontier life.

In Jep's haste to rescue his child, he fell to the ground in a sinking fit.

He must have lain there many hours, for the moon was in the sky when he came to.

Then, with stern resolve, he most actively prepared himself for the war path, and was on their trail, alone, but a host in himself, with the same three dogs (very young then), hereinbefore mentioned.

It was past the middle of the night when Jep fell upon

their sleeping camp and dispatched all, in one of the most desperate struggles of the many he has had with the red men, save their leader, "Dead Eye," who escaped under cover of the darkness, and hastily retreated many miles away, to a grand encampment of his friends; there to tell the triumphs of his hand, and the fate of his fallen companions; he vowed a vow of revenge, accompanied with the superstitious mimickry which attends the expression of the dire hate in an Indian's breast, against the race of white men generally.

Anda heard it and shuddered at the strange rehearsal, and resolved to secretly assist the fated white man, if she could, by sending her servant "La Dredo," true and ever trusted, with all possible dispatch, with a small white flag of friendship in search of Jep, to warn of the deadly intention of his enemies.

"Slave of 'Dead Eye' mourns with you in the loss of wife and child, and sends her 'La Dredo' as a herald to tell thee of her people's coming to slay and to kill. Let this be secret, and a warning in time.

"Signed, "ANDA."

Away the herald flew with the speed of the wind; and, after a day's delay, in the entanglements of an Ohio forest, he found Jep and approached with his friendly flag, and delivered his message, only in time for Jep to read its contents and thrust it hastily into his pocket, when a hundred arrows sped with deadly aim, killing "La Dredo" instantly, and grazing the body of Jep in twenty places.

With the agility of a tiger, or the speed of a lightning flash, he flew over marsh, mound, and bog, dodging behind trees and stones for miles, and outstripped all of his pursuers, save one, the one he wished most to meet, "Dead

Eye," who had disabled Jep's left arm, for the time being, with a well directed arrow's flight, sped as they were running.

Jep knew him, and with his trusty rifle's butt beat out "Dead Eye's" brains, at the base of a rock near what was known, some years thereafter, as Losantiville, now Cincinnati.

He had but a few moments in which to do his work, but he did it well, speeding on again to avoid his wrathful pursuers, he made no halt or stop till well into the night.

Jep was very fleet of foot. No Indian could outrun him; and his dogs were trained so that they followed, the one after the other, just behind his flying footsteps, on and on, as he ran, halting only when the nightfall had sheltered him from his foes.

He spent a sleepless night in the woods, mourning, pondering, thinking.

The next day he went back to bury his dead; but the Indians, well knowing that he would return for such a purpose, were watching so that he could not perform that last sad office.

What would he do? He "would find that unseen friend who had sent the message, and thank her before leaving the country."

Some days and nights passed, perhaps a week in all, from the day of his resolve till its fulfillment; but Jep was not idle in the meantime. He was reconnoitering and had the Indian camp accurately located.

And now it remained to give his unknown friend some kind of signal that she might recognize, for he was determined to see her, even at the risk of his life, before leaving that region.

The opportunity came on a Sunday evening, when all the warriors and braves were holding a war-dance, some distance from the center of their camp; and from a sheltering cliff of rocks and clump of stunted undergrowth which furnished him protection from their view.

He could not have been more than five rods from her wigwam. As the first low notes, somewhat like the mocking-bird, sounded from Jep's lips, she came forth and stood listening attentively for some minutes, till Jep had repeated the call several times; then she went a kind of round-about way to the clump of trees which sheltered Jep. Cautiously and carefully she stepped.

He met her with the message in his hand. He thanked her with all the ardor of a true soul "for saving his life, but deplored the death of her page, 'La Dredo,' from the first flight of their dastard arrows."

She had "heard it all; the death of her servant and that of 'Dead Eye.'" She "mourned for 'La Dredo,' but didn't grieve for the dead chief, who was a tyrant to her and a devil at heart; who had selected her from the Pawnee tribe some years before to be his wife, against her will."

They talked long, concealed as they were from intrusion. She told him of the terrible tyranny of her dead chief, and her hatred of such a life as she was leading. She "would leave that tribe forever were it not that she had a little daughter, Merl, only a few months old."

Jep loved the kind and cordial manner with which she told him all, and insisted that she should "get the babe and we'll start this very night for the Rocky Mountains."

"Only a few miles from here, I have a friend who will furnish horses and wagon, covered and arranged for our

convenience, with food for a part or all of the way, for John Edwards himself has been an emigrant, and but lately come into this terrible neighborhood. I have some money with which to purchase the outfit. Go, get the babe, return, and we'll be friends for life."

It was enough. In one-half hour they were retreating from that Indian camp. Jep was carrying the sleeping babe, and Anda was walking at his side, and the dogs behind.

After some seven miles of travel, they awoke John Edwards from a peaceful sleep and negotiated the purchase of the team, and arranged about food and clothing for comfortable camping out at night, cooking utensils, thus preparing for a long drive generally.

Before the clock struck twelve M., they were rolling over the rough track leading West, which the first settlers of that region had made.

John Edwards promised to "tell nothing," and he very likely kept his word, for those early frontiersmen were like brothers, true and tried to each other.

They only halted to water the horses, a span of noble bays, three or four times, till the shades of the next succeeding night began to gather around. Then they sought and found a camping place in a pleasant nook beside a sparkling creek, whose rippling rills flowed away like shining silver through the fragrant meadows beyond.

Supper was prepared and partaken of, by Jep, with much relish, for he had eaten but little for many days, Anda was too much troubled with thoughts of her escape from a terrible life, with her idolized child, to relish food much until the cravings of hunger set in, but the appetite of the dogs was very keen.

Thus they traveled day after day, week after week,

till two months and a half were gone, and at last reached the mountains without any serious mishap on the way; although they were often in much danger from roving bands of Indians between the Missouri river and their destination.

They stopped in that part of the same, near what is now known as "Golden Gate." Here Jep erected a temporary, but quite convenient log cabin, and prepared it with comforts for the winter; selling his team and outfit to a trader on the plains below, after laying in a winter's supply of provisions for the three.

Jep loved hunting and trapping, and had purchased some traps so that he might pursue his favorite occupation, and was very successful in catching the mountain beaver and mountain marten, and disposed of large quantities of the furs of the same to traders the following winter after their first arrival.

Anda was the same patient, faithful, loving creature, which we have seen her to have been through that first winter in the mountains. Jep was in the habit of going off on exploring expeditions for several days together, which caused her some uneasiness. But the little babe, Merl, occupied her time, and so the months went, one after another.

In one of his rambles he had accidently overheard some trappers talking of a "gilded lodge" in an "Inaccessible Cliff" called "Medevon," near Central Park (they being unable to find it), that superstition had "fitted up with all the wonderful things of which the imagination can picture," and which was said to be "uninhabited." Jep resolved, in his quiet way, to make a visit of reconnoissance to that country and explore this wonderful lodge.

So, accordingly, he returned to his cabin and told Anda that he would "be gone for some two weeks, but would surely and safely return."

She never questioned his right to go or his truthfulness as to returning.

Therefore, on the next morning, Jep started to find the "gilded lodge" and spent some days in reaching the region of its whereabouts.

As the snows were deep in that season of the year, it became necessary to use snow-shoes some of the time. He spent two more days, in what, to him, seemed a fruitless search. He became quite fearful of finding the lodge, when fortune favored him at last, for he actually stumbled and fell from a cliff, some twenty feet, alighting at the very door of the "gilded lodge," opening it with the force of the fall.

Somewhat stunned and badly shaken, he soon recovered, however, to find the dogs fawning over him (for he never went out without his dogs) and making quite an ado to bring him back to consciousness.

He arose, and with the nerve of a man prepared for anything, knocked several times on the half-open door, in hopes to bring out some of its inmates (if any there were) to the light of day; but no response.

He opened wider the door and entered.

He found spacious apartments finely furnished with many curious trinkets of art and specimens from nature's laboratory, which, at once, excited his admiration and puzzled his judgment much, as to whether or not it was real reality that his eyes beheld, or was he in fairy land? transported thither by some mysterious underground passage from the shores of the earthly sphere which he had so lately inhabited?

Thus he questioned and queried for some minutes, going to the door in the meantime and taking a survey of the ledge from which he had fallen and the winding walk-way which led from the door, over which no mortal foot had passed for many years.

The path was an underground one, but sufficiently lighted at either end to admit of a minute examination by the assistance of the rays of day which came streaming in.

Jep followed it on to the end of the archway, and looked the snow over carefully. No trace of a human foot was anywhere visible. The over-arching pathway or entrance was admirably adapted to mislead and deceive the explorer as to the lodge's location; but "this is so much the better," thought Jep, "for it will be the securer." It was strange, indeed.

However, Jep had come to explore the lodge and its mystery, so far as he could do so, and he would remain for the night within its walls, and, perhaps, for some days in the neighborhood of its location, to ascertain whether or not to secure it as a home; for his greatest fear, in disputing for possession, was that some mortal, or mortals, inhabited it, and in that event it would be exceedingly embarrassing, and not a little dangerous, to dispute possession with the proprietors of the same. He felt no concern whatever in the thought that sightless spectres held dominion there, for he had never been molested by those ethereal wanderers, whom so many believe visit, and even remain for a time, on this earth of ours.

After thus musing for some time, about the probable and the improbable phenomenon of nature, and the mystic superstitions which have such a hold on the peculiarly fashioned mind, he retraced his steps and entered, what, to him, seemed a place of enchantment, once again.

He was very tired and so were the dogs. He prepared to remain for the night, which was fast approaching.

Jep stationed himself by the door, just within, and bade the dogs "lie down to rest," and there, on watch with his trusty rifle, he passed the long, and, to him, a somewhat lonely night, musing in reveric mood over the prospect of a secure and safe retreat for Anda and Merl, when he was off on the trail of some living foe or track of some animal of the chase.

As yet, he had found no opposing occupant of flesh or blood in possession of the gilded lodge, and he didn't greatly fear that there would be presented to his notice such an occupant; and, as to the spirits of phantasy which found such, or formed such, beautiful walls and gathered such rare materials, they surely could not find it in their delicate and sensitive natures to do him or his harm. Thus he reasoned and mused, until returning morn, when he and the dogs went forth into the valley below, carefully viewing the secluded entrance way which led to the lodge, so that he might find it again.

Winding along for some miles down the valley, Jep came to a sort of rude settlement, where was a store and several small huts or cabins of traders and trappers.

He learned that the store was called "Lunday's Leghorn House," and that he could find here, "ample food and good lodging, if he required the same," from a sort of good-natured looking individual loitering around the store door.

Jep spent but little time in obtaining an ample breakfast for himself and the dogs. And, having paid for the same, he retired unquestioned, with dogs and gun, for, in those days, few questions were asked and fewer answered, which were of anything like a personal nature among this class of individuals.

Jep's task was to explore the surrounding country, and to "know for himself" if the gilded lodge was inhabited or vacant.

To fully accomplish this object, and satisfy himself, consumed some few days, of searching, examining, exploring, and surveying that region carefully over.

This done, he returned to Anda and Merl, in due process of time, with the flattering news that he "had found a home, secure from friends and foes, to which they would go, and possess it when the season opened." He told Anda of its appearance, and his discoveries thereabouts.

He returned again that winter no less than five times to the lodge, with the view of ascertaining if aught entered or departed therefrom of human shape, dryad, or dwarf; but found never trace of footprint or track, belonging to the material world, neither that of silken-sandaled seraph within or about its mysterious precincts.

He fully had determined to take Anda and Merl there, and enjoy its comforts, for he believed the lodge to have once been the possessions of some mighty ruler in other ages, whose lease of life had been forfeited, and whose soul had, perchance, gone to a brighter bourn on the shores of some celestial paradise; to roam and rest amid its ever varying scenery, without coming back to the borders of this world to dispute possession with mortals.

The reader has heretofore seen their passage up the valley, on their journey to possess the lodge, located in the "Inaccessible Cliff of Medevon," and has traced the occurrences and happenings of its inmates, in the onward flow of time, through more than twenty years. The reader has seen them come and go. But where are they now? And who was the proud possessor of the gilded lodge originally?

Ah ! well may we ask, but speculation and probability alone must answer, if answer there be had.

That the actors in this sketch have long since passed from earth's sphere to another shore, by the course of nature, is true, as well as the original occupant, or occupants of the gilded lodge. But who or what he, she, they were is a very different question, and one not of easy solution. There was the lodge, located in a secure and formidable retreat, containing a vast amount of wonders and curiosities (even before Jep added the many comforts and conveniences of life, as well as a valuable library, thereto), which must have been gathered by extensive travel or liberal purchase, from various parts of the civilized and uncivilized world.

Had the lodge been discovered by white men, before its demolition by inhuman Indian hands, there might have been much light thrown upon its former occupant, or occupants, by some trace or sign or trinket or chart, which was scattered and consumed in the flames that lighted the warlike revel of those lawless red men who found it.

The traveler, at this day, can discern nothing but a torn and seamed cavern, dark and desolate, where once the "Gilded Lodge of Medevon" held its treasure and its cheer, for those of other ages.

Might not the owner thereof have been master of a race, different from our own, whose last vestiges have been swept away by tide and time? Or, had the red men of the forest a ruler, or chief, whose stronghold it was before we drifted to their shores? It is a mystery, like many another mystery, which shall forever remain buried in the inconceivable mysteries of God's providence, until the development and consummation of His mighty plan

and purpose is shown more fully in the creation of the races.

That there is an interest awakened in the breast of the antiquarian, in making search for a record that will tell the tale of other days, cannot be questioned, which approaches enchantment at times.

The sand fields of New Mexico held the last foot prints made visible to our eyes, of Jep, Anda and Merl; and the Indians, in their mad dances, beheld the tongues of the last leaping flames which consumed the greater part of the contents of the lodge of Medevon. The rest of the record is lost.

My task is done. But, reader, before we part company, let us not too harshly judge Jep, whose hands were only raised in revenge, after that dastard deed of the Indians, which murdered a wife and child and laid a home in ruins. Let the God that shall judge us all pass sentence, or favor, on Anda, as she shall deserve, remembering that she was dutiful and kind in all domestic matters. And let us hope to meet the wronged Merl in the realms of light, beside the meandering streams of mercy, above, accompanied by her Rodero; for no purer soul hath wandered earthward from the gates of heaven, in the history of a race, than hers.

LULULEE.

In a beautiful vale of New England, many years ago, I chased the golden-winged butterfly, and had my day dreams building air castles, and seeing the ladened ships with their white sails go floating by, thinking that sometime, in the far away future, a ship would shoreward sail for me, richly freighted with the gems of earth. And often, with book in hand, for a half holiday, would I wander down to the water's edge, reading some fairy tale, or penning, now and then, a line of beguiling thought to the moon, stars, or world around me.

After a few short years I wended away from those youthful haunts, out into the wide, wide world; and there found another sunny glade, another lovely spot, to roam and recreate in.

Sometimes, in my rambles, I would meet Lululee, a neighbor's daughter, with liquid brown eyes and sunny hair, and a complexion akin to those terrestrial fairies which, oft, on summer nights, go tripping o'er the lawn, scattering halos of glory round.

Many, many days we wended together reading nature, growing more mature and seeing scenes which led our youthful minds to contemplate, in profoundest admiration, the stupendous works of God.

As the years sped on apace, we sought each other's society more and more, and restless seemed, then, when one was away from our favorite haunts. She, a maiden grown, and I, not much her senior, became aware of the presence of love in our hearts.

For sometime, we had roamed those hills and that valley fair without a thought of Cupid or his bow, till one bright evening when the setting sun gilded the golden foliage of an Autumnal twilight, we sat on a fallen tree with hands locked in love's embrace, looking into the silent waters which lay at our feet like a sea of gold, stretching away in the distance below the red and tinted horizon.

We spoke but few words, for we were sensibly aware of the presence of the love god Eros, and felt that he had enkindled in our souls a fire which the mists of time could never quench. A change came over all things. The mountains in the distance seemed tipped and tinged with gold. The fair and fragrant tints of the green carpet of earth stretching away through the valley caused Lululee to speak of its changing colors. Brilliant and bright flowers sprang up where we had hitherto seen none. The music of the little rill rippling just behind us, and trickling adown the mountain side from the cool and crystal spring at its source, sounded sweeter, as if a lost angel lingered there to cheer it on to the great ocean of life. The delicate white hue of the daisies made a strange contrast with the ruby red lips of the asphodel; and Hope arose in our paths, inviting, like an angel divine, to a higher and holier life amid the bounty of God so lavishly spread on every hand. The rays of the receding sun came with a warmer glow, lighting up all the beautiful horizon; and the sleepy zephyrs seemed lulled to a repose amid the silence of no sound; gay colored birds went winging with

joyous notes over our heads, warbling their songs of love; while sounding on the night-tide came music more divine than the harp of Æolus e'er told.

She seemed to me a seraphim from the sacred sphere, as I looked into her angel eyes, impressing a kiss of passionate love on her willing lips.

For days we met at our wonted resort with the purest motive of love. She was artless and innocent as the brief life we had led among the flowers. No guile dissembled the fervor of love within our souls, while we examined the minutest recesses of our hearts as we walked and talked together of the mighty change which of late had been wrought therein.

In that sweet sanctuary of spotless love, with the rustle of angel pinions on the incense-freighted air, we threaded the varying vistas of reveric thought, in a sort of dreamy wanderings along the shores of paradise. She seemed to me more angelical than mortal; and more than once I fancied that a subdued and celestial hue of mild and mellow light broke around her features much too heavenly to remain in this world, where is visible the melancholy traces of decay.

Who dare assert celestial surroundings shall not exist in the hereafter, when the soul is so susceptible to the softest touch of nature's harp amid this earthly span, beautifully divine? Earth once was an Eden fair, and although the serpent came blighting hopes and hearts; making the mistletoe wither and fade by the breath of the tomb; yet there are traces of celestial footsteps on earth, and God-like fashionings as it sped forth from the Almighty's hand, out into boundless space. Many a finely-fibered soul has seen beauty and bliss enough on every hand, wasting for want of worshipers, to make

this sphere of existence more heavenly than most mortals think it might become.

And why should earth's favored spots not be heavenly to eyes that search out the beauties of God's creation? tinted with leaf and vine, foliage green and golden, carpeted with verdure and with bloom; which the silken sandals of angels press as they seek out drooping ones, bearing to them hope's crystal sculptured urns filled with food for the soul?

As those days of youthful hope fled too rapidly by, away into the eternal silence of the past, never again to dawn upon my life, I seemed to feel that Lululee's human frame was tenanted by a spirit, or some strayed soul from the golden barrier which separates the purest angels and most seraphic seraphims from that somewhat lower order of celestials which wait and worship near the gate of gold, longing to enter in where mirth, music and bliss makes short the tedium of an eternal day.

Yes, I looked on her as a divine essence placed for a season amid dying mortals to fulfill some heavenly mandate. And, as I lingered at her side through happy days and silvery eventides, would sometimes enter my musings, thoughts of change. Thoughts that the grim, unseen messenger of death might wander that way, and, in mere wantonness, reap my loved one down, amid all that heaven and bloom without word of warning. And ah, what lonely and languid longings to build a bower of protection round my earthly angel for her defense would stir the troubled emotions of my soul. Would I flee with her beyond the paths where death treads so wasteful and so wantonly on marring the form divine with his dull but deadening weapon of terrible warfare? And then I would banish such thoughts saying, "She is too heavenly for the foul

hands of this sightless shade to molest or mar." And would come over my soul as her softest accents fell into my heart's deepest center more beautiful thoughts of a wedding day, breaking clear and brilliant above the lowering horizon's shaded and interspersed gloom, lying away in the dismal distance, many roods and ranges of far-off sweep.

Amid those thoughts and longings, a change came over us; for a few years took us from that valley fair to the frescoed walls of college and chapel in the dingy city's shade, distant some miles away.

But we went together thither, and together as classmates and lovers lingered through those years of college life.

With what joyous pride and hope did I behold from day to day the unfolding and budding of womanly graces, beautiful as the lily that blooms on the silvery bosom of some crystal lake, soon to die in the death-freighted air which wafts its dampened odors from the dying myrtle at the door of the tomb.

Our commencement past and its honors conferred, from that hour there came a change, a cruel change, which chilled the current of my soul; for plain as the invisible finger of fate writes his heartless ritual on the delicate brow of love, did that relentless monster touch my Lululee in merciless merriment.

She drooped and faded like one breathing poisoned airs from filthy tarns of tangled verdure, decaying in the dead slime of motionless putrification. The bloom faded from her face. The holy light of heaven from her brow, and the deep liquid intelligence left her eye, and scarce three days had elapsed ere my lovely Lululee lay in her death shroud, amid weeping friends and relatives, at what

was once her home; fondly pressed to my agitated heart almost as cold as her's, and worse tormented than sinners, amid flame that never licks away the life of the condemned of God.

I followed her to the tomb amid the forms of the last solemn service. I heard the cold clods strike on the coffin lid, which sent their dull dead sounds through what I thought my dying heart; for scarce did the receding pulsations perform their office.

Long I lingered there, with one or two waiting friends gazing on that spot of earth which contained my all, until awakened from my strange stupor and sadness by kindly borders of cheer.

And, as I turned to go, there fell on my last glance at the grave, the form of an angel with the heavenly herald of hope bound about her bosom in golden letters; and, with a small white scroll, she pointed up the shining steps to the celestial sphere, down which she had come to the grave of my dead darling, which was visible to my mortal eyes but a moment. Whereat, a rustling as of silken sounding tissues fell on my ear; while low, melodious and loving, there broke a celestial melody from the borders of paradise.

The earth seemed changed. The valleys, the hills and the rivers were not the same to me, for a deep sorrow lay on my soul, which might elude the careless eye in the effort at good cheer.

I wended oft in the 'twilight eventide along our favorite walks, and through our accustomed haunts to soothe my sorrow; but her shadow gone, the grove grew gloomy. The crystal spring put on a deadened and darksome hue, and when the birds of beautiful plumage piped their roundelays, the notes seemed dying in the distant and

oppressive air. The bloom of the flower had faded away like the blighted hope of a fruitless life; and there was a nameless longing at my heart to burst with one bound from nature into nothingness, from the verge of time into the limitless confines of the eternal world, that face to see again, that form to fold to my tired and troubled bosom.

But the beyond, ah, the beyond; do bosoms move in the vast measureless, motionless beyond to the throbbings of love?

'Tis a question any one may ask, but what philosopher of earth shall pen an unerring answer thereto?

I lingered long enough in that cold grown valley to find no returning joy as the months sped their prime. On the darkest and most gloomy day of all the year, I bade "good by" to the few friends who remained and took my journey toward the setting sun; for what? to draw the thick and somber veil of mystic oblivion over all the past. What delusion, how fatally I had misjudged, for, ever in the silence of the night, or amid the busy throng of pleasure seekers, that face was before me in my dreams and in the draughtless pleasures which I sought to drain from the fashionable world.

Over all, there hung a cloud of gloom which no breeze of pleasure would waft hence. But, by dint of industry and a life of honor, the star of fortune rose and shown over my way. I vainly fancied that the clink of the golden guinea would heal all heart wounds; but there is a dead and hollow sound in the sovereign which but pains the heart pining for its idol flown.

Thus tiring of the vain delusions of life, I betook myself to writing and rhyming; worshiping my fairy angel in an atmosphere of fondest hope.

Along all the winding paths which I have traced since then, amid all the varying scenes of an active life, has my Lululee's ideal presence, ever near, cheered me over life's rugged and tiresome way to the fair and fragrant hills of hope, which stretch, towering heavenward, bright as the golden radiance of a celestial morn, whose spotless clouds of purity rise one above the other, in the archway of destiny, bending so beautifully over us amid the silent blue of the dome of God, set with stars of intelligence and points of light fitly reflected to impress upon mortals something of the immortality of the Eternal One and His Kingdom hid from human eyes.

Yes, in a sort of soul-sustaining reverie, in a reposeful confidence, in deep and satisfied peace of mind, has that departed form been my guide and angel of hope.

And, although I miss her mortal presence, yet I feel, I know she hovers round and about me on seraphic wing that never tires during my wakeful moments, and, when reposing, soothed by Sleep—the twin brother of Death, her bright and heavenly pinions waft a restful requiem of soft sweet music round my soul. So that in my waking moods I am sensibly aware of the intercommunication of soul and soul, sipping the balms from love's celestial asphodels which bloom in the fields of paradise.

O, disappoint me not, fair Lululee ; disappoint me not thy love and angel presence, beyond the beyond, where the fetterless flight of time flits tireless on, and love unbounded holds sway, through an endless sweep, amid those spheres whose heavenly hills rise in grandeur far past man's painting, and golden shafted trees bear decayless fruit, free as the crystal waters that flow by the throne of God.

There, my Lululee, we shall meet never again to part !

MONK MODA.

In the sixteenth century, a pious and God-fearing monk, Hanzel Moda by name (known for many miles around as Monk Moda), built him a monastery in the mountains of Akaba, in that range where the sacred Sinai rears its head heavenward, and about whose brow still lingers some traces of that holy and tranquil light which illumined the robes of Christ in the era I.

Moda's companion, at first, was a faithful dog of the St. Bernard species, with long black silken hair and an intelligent eye which seemed to observe the slightest motion on the part of his master, as if the saint-like atmosphere in which Moda moved had its influence upon the gentle canine. Being well aware of the noble nature of his dog, trusty under any and all circumstances, the Monk had given him the name of Trusto.

There was also a member of the feline species, a large and honorable looking cat, which shared the monastery of his master, named Yico.

The monastery was built of stone, stone within and stone without, cemented in masonry, a rude and rural structure of some height, sort of sphereal shaped with now and then a scant crevice or aperture through which the daylight might shine but feebly ; however, the light

of the sun was not much needed, as the saintly Moda, night and day, kept burning a flame of incense on a sort of shining altar which had been prepared in the most holy part of the mosque.

There were four apartments or rooms of about equal dimensions, some nine or ten feet square, used respectively for sleeping rooms, kitchen, and the "holy of holies," where no profane form had ever entered; even Trusto and Yico were so well trained in the monkish faith that they were never known to cross the threshold of that sacred room. But, while their pious master was at his devotions, would stand with bowed heads without, at the doorway looking therein.

For six years had Moda occupied this aforesaid monastery, alone with his dumb companions, growing more saint-like every day. The long hours spent in devotional exercises, reading and praying to the Eternal Spirit through the opening day and at the curfew bell, 'tis said are recorded and kept by the historian of the skies, whom Lord Byron mentions as being in "arrear of human ills;" and when the holy man of God walked forth, nature's bounds to scan, his dumb companions followed meekly in the rear, while, with robe of somber shadow, the good Moda walked with head uncovered and reverently bowed in the presence of the Deity.

He avoided human eyes and was supplied with food from Akaba, not far off, by trusty hands that always obeyed his supreme injunction, viz., that never mortal foot unasked should cross a sort of charm circle which he had established by metes and bounds a hundred rods away from the monastery; but provisions could conveniently be left in a certain storehouse which Moda had erected for such a purpose, where, by means of slates with

pencils attached thereto, orders were given and filled; Moda always remitting by mail golden coin to his creditors for articles thus furnished, by handing the same to a cab driver who passed within a hundred and fifty rods of the monastery some three or four times a week, and who was intrusted with the delivery of the mails and all packages of value.

I said no being ever crossed his bounds, but I must have said it thoughtlessly, for, one day as the good monk was taking his accustomed walk in a grove of beautiful palm trees, about fifty rods distant, Moda heard a maiden singing in the Arabian tongue, a sweetly plaintive strain, which touched the soul of the good man, who, in a heedless manner, addressed his footsteps to that part of the grove, thinking the voice might be that of an angel; or, betide the worst that might, he could shrive his soul, if his glance met mortal eyes of the fair sex, unhallowed by Bible teachings and faith in God.

Overcome and bewildered with the maze of golden curls, which hung so profusely about her shoulders, he could not remove his glance of most enraptured holiness, but stood gazing long and silently at the beautiful young damsel before him.

When, approaching with appropriate questions and gentle replies, he learned that she was an Arabian maiden, Delevia Angelica by name, and had wended thitherward in quest of varied scenes amid which to pass the tedium of a summer day. Her artless demeanor and frank reply caused the man of monkish motives to become much interested in this fairy creature, who had been thus providentially thrown in his way; for, of truth, it may be said that even this holy man of God, into whose mind guile never entered, was lonely for

some fair daughter of Eve to waken his finer fancy with her magic touch.

So, without further hesitation, he seated himself upon the trunk of a fallen tree, which Delevia then occupied, and thus addressed himself to her:

> "Thou delightful daughter of man, so fair,
> Too fair for the world and its care,
> Would that thou my monastery might share;

for, within its sacred walls, no mortal discords ever disturb the intercommunication of soul with soul, wending the vistas of God, in that ethereal realm of mind and fancy, whose pathway is peace, and whose passport through its celestial avenues is the book of books."

He paused. She looked surprised and delighted at the fine old man, whose silvery hair and beard of snow seemed bathed with celestial light, diffused through the balmy eventide of that Arabian land; and, being of a nature quite susceptible to the superstitious faith of the times, and thinking that an entrance to his hermitage must be the gateway leading to heaven, replied with kindly speech:

"I shall deem myself but too favored a mortal to renounce the world and enter upon a life of holiness with thee, thou man of God, and the invisible spirit whom thou worshipeth, as becomes a follower of truth divine."

He questioned further.

She promised, and made the promise binding with an oath framed in the ritual of heaven, that she would repair to his abode, and never go hence to reveal any of the secrets of the sacred sanctum, builded by holy hands on Moda's manor.

Accordingly, he guided her glad footsteps thither, for

she much wished to rid herself of the deceptive world and its range of weariness.

She entered the massive portals of the faith-defended shrine, and at once was conscious of being within that circle nearest heaven, where so many wait to wash away the last mortal stain ere the full effulgence of divinest light breaks round their saved souls.

Every kindness that could be shown, consistent with sacred piety, was tendered her. One of the rooms was fitted up for her sleeping apartment, into which, from that day forward, Moda never entered, no more than she, or the trusty hound, or the faithful cat crossed the threshold of the "holy of holies"

As time sped on apace, the good monk failed not to impress her youthful mind with the solemnity of the step into eternity, and the teachings of the Scriptures in the original text, as handed down to Moses on the Mount of God amid the brilliancy of a celestial illumination.

Fairer and more angelical she grew, as the divine effluvia of the sacred incense, which was kept continually burning, instilled itself into her soul.

Some five years had sped their weary flight since Delevia had entered Moda's monastery, when one day, at the grove, singing some saintly hymn, her voice attracted the person of a young and bold brigand, who was riding on weary steed across the small plateau near by.

When, turning in the direction of the singing, he urged his jaded horse hotly onward to the shelter of the grove, where, alighting, he gave rein to the animal, who leisurely nipped the grass beneath the shade trees, while his master, Vergeldero Mardigo, entered the grove in quest of the fair form who gave forth such a voice of sweetness. He had approached but a few steps, when lo, he beheld Delevia

in all the attraction of womanly graces, sitting on her accustomed tree, singing to the birds of beauty perched upon the boughs above her head. A wealth of golden curls fell about her beautifully rounded shoulders, which made her at all times most attractive. Her angel eyes, tinted with the liquid blue of heaven, and her mild and pleasant brow, with features delicately moulded in nature's most perfect measure, caused Vergeldero to stay his approaching steps, and raise his plumed turban in attitude of chivalrous respect.

The bold brigand, before whom foe never lingered long, fancied himself on the confines of paradise, gazing at a strayed seraph from its holy habitation. He remained in this attitude, seeming to be incapable of approach or retreat, until Delevia, wearied with the suspense and unbroken monotony around, said :

"Cavalier, comest thou with prudent intention or base, ignoble motive? that thou approacheth the privacy of a lady's bower thus rudely and unbidden?"

Whereat, Vergeldero, in the same Arabian dialect, made fitting reply with the grace of a beau ideal (for he had been the guest of many a royal court, and played the carpet knight oft times when his weary steed rested for a time from toiling over the rough sides of the Arabian mountains) saying, "my mission, maid of the sun, is naught but honors earned in quest of worthy mortals, and perceiving thine to be the most musical voice that ever lost a chord to trees and trellised vines for auditors, I have come to pay homage at thy shrine, O ! fairest of the fair."

His stay was short. Her speech was blended with blandishments of the female art.

"He might ride that way again when the birds would

near his coming ere two suns had set: gilding leafy colonade with receding beams of gold; and would she care?"

"Not when her guardian angels were near
To lull to rest the passion in her breast,
Which man's artful wiles doth sometimes test;
Then, Sir Cavalier, thou mayest come here."

He rode away.

She hastened to the monastery to offer up her devotional and shrive her soul of the mortal moods which his coming had moved therein.

But, as the days came and went, her singing hymns in the grove of palm trees became more frequent. While, with freshened steed our cavalier skimmed the skirts of the grove ere the dew was off the lawn, fancying that heaven lay therein. The hours went like winged doves with a golden thread running through all their tireless time.

They loved as lovers do, when the ardor of rapt emotions stir the heart's deep center to its fathomless depths of love. Moda had noted a change of late in Delevia. While she seemed devoted to his domestics and her devotional duties, yet she was away more and seemed dreamy and abstract, becoming, daily, more and more like the unknown quantity which woman is.

It was a source of deep and poignant concern to Moda thus to behold the one bright flower of his earthly hope pining and drooping away for want of the celestial savors and effluvia of holiness diffused through the soul by more implicit faith in the "lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He counseled her with tender paternal solicitude, perchance, to ascertain the cause of her deep abjection, when moving amid the emblems of that brighter

life which Moda's lavish expenditures had provided his monastery with. He failed, however, to detect the real cause (for Vergeldero and Delevia were pledged to disclose nothing of their love or its meetings to the good monk) of her drooping spirits, but attributed it to some evil genius which the god of the lower world had liberated from chains to torment this Eden flower of his tender care.

Moda, as a God-fearing monk, therefore addressed his petitions and most fervent prayers to the God of heaven, and invoked aid of the celestials to protect Delevia's soul from the ravages of this unholy tormentor.

But, one morning, not many suns hence, what was Moda's fatal forethought but to have revealed before his very eyes, as he looked out from the door of his monastery, a sort of dew-lighted painting on the bright face of the breaking day, against the serene sky, a picture of Delevia and a bold moss-trooper, mounted on fleet Arabian steeds, hastening from the land of his fathers.

It was as a picture or mirage moving before the eye of his soul, and remained but an instant; that instant, however, was long enough to reveal the fatal truth to Moda's understanding that Delevia had eloped from the sanctuary of God with an unshrived knight.

Oh, horror of horrors! Doom of all dooms! for such an angelical being as gentle Delevia to become the slave of some unchaste person, never sanctified by the holy incense diffused from the pure bright embers of refining salvation.

Lonely, sorrowful, and dejected, did the good monk bow to his fate, mourning with his face in the dust, for many days, refusing to look upon the light of the sun lest he should see in its sacred beams some token of God's

displeasure at His lowly follower's unwatchfulness over the tender charge given to his keeping.

He subjected himself to the most extreme penance, thereby hoping to regain his former vantage ground of holiness with the Lord.

Even Trusto and Yico seemed affected by reason of Delevia's absence. The little birds which hid in the boughs of the drooping palm trees about the doorway, sang less sweetly; and, in the eventide, the lonesome katydid and the strayed cricket gave forth a more uncertain chirp amid the solemn sounds of night. The moon and stars seemed to dim and darken in the Autumnal glow which had, at this season of the year, shone glorious golden about the limitless expanse of the universe below. Even the sacred light of the incense flickered and flamed in an unnatural way, as if evil spirits were toying with its heavenly, hallowed burnings. The incense-purified censer about which had streamed an aureola of soft celestial light, now changed to the smallest possible point.

It was indeed a time of heart sorrow and abject loneliness to the good monk; but, by doing double penance and crossing himself in fear, he regained, to a great extent, his former moods and manners. When he fully realized that she was gone, he appeared to be more grieved than when he renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil, for that (to him) sacred enclosure of stone and masonry.

He would have his day dreams and nightly reveries floating over the stream of time in fancy's fairy pinnace with Delevia at its bows, the first to set foot on the celestial shore, just hid by a few clouds from his weary eyes,—weary with watching for Gabriel's coming.

He made all the inquiry of passers by (possible under

the circumstances) concerning Delevia, and learned that her lover was an Arabian conqueror of some fortune and favor in the Spanish court, about whose vice-polluted borders he had for years held sway. A bold, bad leader, in the wickedness of a wicked age. A desecrator of thrones and shrines. A villain at heart with a fair face, veiled in the devil's livery, was this brigand, and she, the gentle Delevia, had gone, gone far hence, to be his partner in the play of pandemonium there enacted.

As these thoughts ran through his mind, stirring its deep, deep center, a sort of shade passed over his patriarchal features which was indicative of the soul's distress.

These facts gleaned hastily, and somewhat unsatisfactorily, created new sources of alarm in Moda's mind. At times, he half formed the resolve to go in quest of the gentle Delevia, and, if possible, gain her back to holiness and to heaven. But, remembering his vow never more to mix or mingle with the world, he was restrained from so doing, for, should he go on such a quest, he must, of necessity, forego some of the solemn rite and ritual which he so strenuously adhered to in the monastery.

Pity it was to see the good old man, well stricken in years, with beard and hair of silver hue, wandering about those prescribed bounds in that abstract manner when the body wanders on unmindful of the missing soul, temporarily withdrawn, to contemplate scenes of celestial sunlight which come floating quite near this earth, when we are favored with glimpses of the immortality beyond.

He pictured to his mind her fate, tracing by the most extravagant imaginings her future through all its windings, on, and on, to the last gasp of dying mortality. 'Tis little wonder that the mind of this pious old man brooded on her destiny, when 'tis remembered that there were but

two objects left for his adoration ; the one in heaven, the other on the earth. The one his God. The other his Delevia, yes, his Delevia, although his lips had never met hers, and his holy hands had never fondled the fair form of that gentle maiden, lovely in the extreme. The longings of love. The links of affection between them had never been welded by Cupid's painful welding hammer, yet her strange taking off by a rude rake of the desert, wounded Moda's soul and awoke in his being all the fire of an enthusiastic nature.

Did the old man now love? Yes, he loved the angel image of his dear Delevia. He pondered long and deeply on her divine shadowing which had been opening and ripening to view through all the years of her stay at the monastery, and the one crowning hope of the good monk was to see her, sometime, beyond the Jordan, where the fair delectable hills arise in serene grandeur, crowned with a coronation of golden jewels of more splendid lustre than the pillars of Chilminar revealed to the delighted eyes of the Peri, in quest of that sacred gift with which to pass the gates of gold.

But now, alas ! 'Twere worse than chance, the barest chance, should her training in divine things gain her soul entrance at the gate of God, as against the undue influence of Vergeldero daily thrown about her.

In truth the good Moda despaired of ever realizing the consummation of his blissful dream, viz. : the meeting in the spirit world.

The days seemed to glide wearily away. The lengthening shadows grew on apace. The clouds seemed tinged with a more sombre hue, and the earth seemed to grow more hard and harsh to his worn and wounded knees bent in attitude of worship. Yet he prayed on as the years

fled with no tidings from Delevia; waiting for the summons, waiting for the few receding suns to set, and the few remaining sands of life to trickle through the hour-glass of time. Waiting for the golden bowl to be broken and shattered by the current of counter fears, which are produced by the strife of spirits (good and bad), contending for the possession of his, and every other mortal's soul veering over the bank of darkness into the beyond, the beyond, far past the by, and the be, all.

A change came over Moda. He felt lonely and ready to rest; so he clad himself in the sacred panoply of the mosque which he had gathered about him, and with the most solemn care and caution, went through the rite and ritual of the devotional exercises to the end; and then he laid down on a sort of couch or lounge, to take his last rest, with a small Bible clasped in his hand. From thence, the good Moda never arose again to quench or replenish the burning incense.

He was dead, dead to earth, but alive to that better and brighter realm above, where silvery waters ripple over golden sands, and heavenly harps sound the carols of paradise. The door remained open, and Trusto seemed to realize that his master was bidden away, for he went out on the landscape, and began a piteous, doleful howl of grief to the sky, such a howl as dogs only can groan out in their dumb dolefulness when death's angel cometh.

The howls of the dog soon attracted the attention of passers-by, who resorted to the monastery, and found Moda dead, with the cat Yico gasping in the dying throes of death, for the taking away of her master.

But a few seconds elapsed, and the feline underwent the last earthly change from activity to inactivity; but, who shall say whether all of Yico remained there in death,

or went searching for Moda's soul round another monastery in the sun lands of eternal light, yes, who shall say ?

Faithful hands were summoned, and the body of Moda was removed to the grove of palm trees, and there buried according to the monkish ritual which obtains in the Arabian lands.

Many, many days thereafter, the dog Trusto stood guard over his master's grave, as if chained to the spot by some instinct other than that of the brute as defined in the books. He too, died, and wasted away like Yico, without a burial.

Delevia's fate unknown, unsung, and unmourned, remains to this day a mystery; although some controversy exists as to whether or not, at her death, the soul entered paradise or purgatory, or the lower world as a fitting guide for Vergeldero to the door of Pluto's court.

'Tis not, and doubtless will not be known, for the events narrated herein, occurred long years and years ago. But hope suggests the better destiny; for her soul was so angelical ere Vergeldero met her ; and she may have retained enough of the divine nature to pass her soul within the holy gate when she, too, went on that strange, wide, wild flight of flights, into the dark curtained world.

Would that it may be true. That Moda and Delevia may be seen to stand crowned brightly over on the beautiful mount of God in the realm of souls, amid that greatest and grandest of assemblages, which earth's millions are to make up.

MERRY MAY.

THE birds will soon come again with their warbling notes and beautiful plumage, and all the earth will laugh at the approach of Merry May; gathering bud and blossoms in silver-tipped slippers with laugh that brings to life those love thoughts which the winter's chill hath frozen.

Can't you see her coming in the distance, with turban of silken green, with sparkling diamonds in her hair, and face and form like that of an angel?

And, hark to the distant strains of music, borne on the breath of spring, from her sylvan lute, made of leaves from the Tan-Sein tree, which grows over the tomb of that illustrious musician of other times. The little fays and fairies which glide along on either hand are in ecstacies at the maiden's glee, as she scatters bud and blossom to the wooing winds.

Up the hill, and on, they come, a merry group, with Cupid in the van; and, behold, e'en now his silvered bow is bended with string of gold, and his diamond pointed arrows reflect a brilliant sheen, as the softened sunlight intercepts their tinseled entanglements, and the timbrel's talking time, in the hand of Virgin Spring

leads on the celestial choir, with a uniformity beyond that of earthly pomp and pageant.

Altogether, that bright, beaming cavalcade shineth like some rare illumined orb, which has wandered without the bounds of paradise, amid the stillness of a celestial eventide falling on God's universe.

The crown of jeweled lustre, on the forehead of angel May, glows like a golden beam from Allah's throne; see, the air grows clear, with spectral light, about that company, as they come, an odoriferous perfume arises on the incense-freighted breeze.

The birds of paradise, which have alighted in the green foliage of yonder grove, glow golden in the slanting sunbeams; and the forest songsters seem alive to the beautiful azure hues which deck the flower and the leaf; for they flit gaily on, warbling, as they go, songs which sound like the notes of a diviner minstrelsy, borrowed from birds of beauty, which warble sacred symphonies amid groves beyond.

The mistletoe bough, the green of the thistle, and the gilt of the ivy vine all blend in a beauty, which hand of man never painted, brush of angel or artist divine hath been there and left these hues of heaven in grove and bower, on carpet green, on the red-lipped edges of the lily, and the rose-bud's blushing bloom.

Forest fairies, with sandal-shod slippers, braided of green and emerald, hath played upon the lawn, before the risen sun shed his smiling rays on nature's meadows, fashioned fair enough to be the tufted carpet on which angel footfalls from the borders of paradise wake no sound, in the shade of whose green growing groves, the gods from the bowers of bliss stand, though unseen to mortal eyes, viewing the beauty of angel May, with all the

heralds of heaven at hand to lend a charm to the dominion, over which she is crowned its beautiful queen.

Such a morn of majesty, such a day of delight, such a scene of saintliness, the dullness of mortal eyes may not see, but when the thrill of a life within bursts control and a sort of celestial mirage falls on the enraptured gaze like a shower of gold thrown over the walls of paradise for the sport of the Peris and the pastime of the Empyrean spirits, then we may behold its beauties.

The eye of that soul which is gifted with the faculty of a more celestial vision on the morn of May, can and does see, shed over the green carpet of earth, something, nay, much of the diversified beauty of the Master's skill whose unrestrained hand is touching up those mansions in the realm of song with hues of the heavenly habitation, for those who quit the May decked with crowns of glorious sunshine.

But see! merry May and her retinue of divinities engage for mirth and pastime in a social on the green; the picnic in the grove, where dozens of youthful maidens, pure as the spirits of heaven, form circling bands of pleasure which makes the hour more holy and the sight more heavenly.

Dull, indeed, must his or her eyes be who has no orb of vision with which to behold foreshadowed in the earthly pathway, some of the beauties and pleasures of paradise.

Those little fairies and woodland nymphs are heaven's heralds sent abroad from its glorious golden gateways and walls of jasper gemmed with jewels to deck the earth with a sort of shadowing of the shaded realm which man calls heaven.

That angel bright which we call the Merry May is heaven's queen sent to preside over the mildest and most lovely season of the twelve divisions of the year, and would that her reign might continue longer, for it is indeed a picture of paradise to look on the silent lake, or the laughing lawn begemmed with dewy grass of a bright May morning.

Reader, did you ever stand on some favorite landscape in the early light, when its flowers and its blooms were bathed with the dews which fall like liquid ether in the spring-time of the May—just to realize the influence of such a scene and season on the soul?

If you never have and will do so, you will be surprised to learn lessons of a new life which will there be born in your being and which will move the soul to a love of the sublime and the beautiful that you never dreamed lay slumbering in your bosom.

You will realize that you are most wonderfully made, and that there is amysterious chord within, which vibrates in perfect unison to the beauty of God's universe ; thus most positively and plainly demonstrating that the same hand that formed the lily and gave the verdure to the grass which so beautifies the landscape, also formed the soul and attributes, for there is a sympathy between the two which could only have been created by the same master workmanship.

Is not the May and its beautiful scenery almost a heaven here below, and do not bright angels of that upper sphere, though unseen to our mortal eyes, visit this world at such seasons when wearying of the pleasures above?

The lily's lovely lips, the tulip's purple vine, and the blushing verbena's slender stem, give to the scene and the

season a coating not of mortal make-up. The twining ivy vine, the myrtle and the asphodel hold heavenly hues; the exotic rose, transplanted from other climes, the eglantine and harebells blush in the breeze's incense, casting a delicious odor, while the foxglove, the moss verbena and the buttercup retain something of the night's delicious dews which sparkle in the sunbeam as he mounts the zenith on his accustomed round.

The blackbirds, with now and then a white one in their midst, like a spirit from heaven, the red-breasted robins, and the wrens, warbling their notes of love, drive the sparrow hawks away.

'Tis delightful to hear their blended carols borne on the balmy breeze, while some barefoot boy, driving the cows to pasture, with his careless shout, and some milking maid with her overflowing pail, varies the forest songster's strains with a bit of a love line, or a heavenly thought hymned to the harp of the church ritual; while some early woodman, with his trusty axe, works away in yonder forest, felling with a will, whose "lusty knocks re-echo many a rood," sending a kind of shiver fluttering in the breeze, for the fall of the forest tree doth but fitly presage the fall of man and all of the animated kingdom.

May is the beginning, the pulseless motions of December is the ending.

But hence such thoughts of sadness amid all this mirth of May, for every hill-top blooms with beauty, every bower invites to its sylvan couch of love, and mated are the feathered songsters, the fearless furry kind that play and gambol in yonder dell; surely this is no season to dream of shadows and of shades.

Listen to the breezy sound of those myriad bees gather-

ing honey from every cup and blossom that invites their wooing.

Not a drone or a sluggard may be seen in the midst or about the borders of this lovely landscape which we have selected to look upon, located in the temperate zone, and watered with the dews of heaven that trickle down through the net-work of an ambient sky.

The sailor's eyes which never see such lovely scenes, or the soldier's angry soul that never softens, surrounded by such loveliness, misses the most of life; though the one may discover a continent, and the other conquer an empire; the one may become renowned in maritime discoveries, and the other gain the warrior's glory; but they miss so much of life's happiness in failing to commune with nature at such a season, that a dwarfishness of soul is the sure result. Gifts of enterprise, or that of destruction may be developed very greatly. None will question the laudable vocation of the sailor (unless, indeed, he throws his life away by a sure suicide in the ice-bound regions of the North, seeking to discover an open sea) in locating homes for men; but many may justly question the soldier's art while he introduces many badges of mourning and woe into the homes of the race, that he may grandly ride in a gilded chariot up the hill of fame, to secure its crowning honors from a few misguided mortals, who are very soon to pass onward to the great day beyond the river, where no crown of human glory shall avail, no matter on whose temples it be borne, or how great the monarch's majesty who moves down to the landing for a passage hence.

At this season of the year, Nature, veiled in her verdant costume of beautiful and varied hues, presents pictures of landscape loveliness, and of rural beauty, and mild

mellowness, which awakens in the soul of the beholder that better and primitive nature of man, with which the Creator endued him in the garden of Eden ere the trail of the serpent left its hideous track on the laughing lawn, where angels and where gods met earth's favored mortals, and conversed in the familiar intercourse of a celestial dialect, thus uniting their mortal and divine loves without molestation or restraint.

But although the track of the serpent is visible in every fair field of flowers, and a shadow which presages change hangs hovering in the horizon, there is a loveliness as of Eden purity, and a fragrance of spicy perfumes that go forth to greet God's glad children in the May-time, which is accelerating and heavenly—which the senses never catch in any portion of the year save the May.

What conception can paint a purer image in earth or air, than the fresh daisy, the purple pink, or the mavis with her song?

What celestial sight falls more heavenly on angelic eyes in the Eden beyond, than that of scores of laughing maidens bedecked with flowers of blooming radiance on a May-day morning?

The Mohammedan Arab may roam his sandy deserts on yearly pilgrimage to Mecca, where never a flower blooms; sustained, through task and trial, by his sublime faith, and gain a wreath of golden rosebuds at the end; but, to me, it seems diviner far to worship the Ruler of earth and skies from the blooming loveliness which He has spread around, and to receive from God, through Nature's hand, His real rose-wreaths and tulip blossoms.

The Hindoo mother may bow to wood and stone, thus worshiping a lifeless deity, which her darksome faith hath taught her to revere; but more fortunate we whose faith

has had its founding in the land where God's flowers bloom fresh from His loving hand, and where mankind holds direct communication with Him through the medium of prayer; where our little infant pledges of love learn to lisp His name, from mamma's knee, ere they can walk.

How could man live in such a clime of fragrance without worshiping the Deity? When he looks around on the blooms of earth, and the supernal beauty of His handiwork, which beams in such a subdued lustre from the face of angel May and her myriad fairies, frail and fond as the Peris of paradise, who wander without the gates seeking the boon that gains admission there?

Through such a scene of loveliness the brook bubbles on its way, with a brighter and more crystal gleam; songsters of the wood warble a more melodious carol, seemingly inspired by the radiance around; school children go to school with lighter hearts; lovers love with a more ardent thrill of affection and adoration, when the blooms of paradise are spread out on the lap of earth; the heavy-hearted laborer, whose spirit is subdued and partly broken by the stress of penury and toil, goes to his task with a more elastic tread, when the song-bird sings a strain of sympathetic cheer, and the green carpet of earth is beautifully interspersed with flower and creeping vine; and even the tramp, which no one cares for, save the Ruler of the skies and His holy angels, will loiter by the way to glean a forget-me-not, or beautiful flower in all of its pristine purity, to grace the tattered buttonhole at his breast, or from whence to inhale a free breath without begging it from some covetous churl, who fell heir to his possessions through rich relations, for the lack of which he would be tramping more forlorn looking than the moving monument

of mercy whom he refuses, with a frown, the hospitality of the slop-barrel.

Reader, did you never view the song-bird's breast when pouring its almost divine lay out on the balmy breezes, at such a season of the year, and did you not observe the trembling thrill of joy which moved that little breast, by the fluttering of the golden-hued feathers which coated it? And have you not observed how different the scene when the song-bird tried to sing at that season of the year when the leaves were falling and the flowers were dying, touched by King Frost's reign? The song seems to die in the atmosphere, and a chill from the North almost freezes the bird's little breast as it sits on some solitary limb lonely, left from the flock who have southward flown.

To me it always seems sad to see such a little lonely looking spirit of God's feathered kingdom ; and once I mind of seeing, in my school days, a drooping swallow on a dead December limb, which with kindly care I caged and tried to comfort, but it grieved and grieved till it grieved its little life away. I buried it tenderly beneath a willow bough, and placed a kind of bird grave-stone there, in my boyish mood, to tell the place again.

Reader, do you know that since I have grown to manhood and wandered far, far away, I have twice returned to that same willow bough to look, to listen, and to think.

The little stone was gone, defaced by time, or, perchance, some ruthless hand hath wantonly removed it, but the thoughts of childhood came clustering there, and scenes, as of the flown time, arose to my mind's eye.

Many Mays had passed, many Decembers gone, but no change in my memory respecting the lone swallow's fate had been made. Peaceful seemed the place, a spirit-spell

filled the brooding silence round. And, when I turned to go, how my crisp foot-falls sounded amid the silence of my soul's deep reverie, into which I had fallen, respecting friends who had been borne to places of silent repose, like the dead swallow of other years.

Oh, if there is a time when the soul's sacred emotions flow, unrestrained by this weight of dying clay, which encumbers it, methinks it is under such circumstances and surroundings. The blooms of May may look fresh, or the snows of December be pure and spotless, but when those whom we loved are gone and can not share the joys of our coming, a shade seems to be walking at our sides, as we wend on, and on, through the silent rooms, the deserted avenues, and the weed-grown vistas of the old homestead.

Mayhap the strifes of life have made the bosom less resolute, and the soul more susceptible to the thoughts which such surroundings suggest; but true it is we are sadly broken in the presence of buried joys and the remembrance of faces gone forever. We are saddened when hopes are flown and anticipated fair days are turned to lowering, cloudy, gloomy ones. The beauty of the flower, the light of the lily, and all the blooms of the heather can not then light the eye with joy or the soul with gladness.

But, when the May comes round again, and we are far from the old homestead haunts, distance and time permit us once more to walk forth and be glad with the gladness of the time, and rejoice with God's vocal choristers, which make the meads and meadows ring with minstrelsy.

'Tis then that the atmosphere is ladened with subdued mellowness and mildness, approaching that of supernal airs, as they waft the silvered leaves on golden branches

ringing the melodious bells of heaven, and moving the congregations of the saints to worship and to sing. I more than half believe that the great God who rules the universe, and "tempers the breeze to the shorn lamb," permits a part of those supernal airs of the heavenly Eden to waft across the river of death, hitherward, to cheer his faithful ones, waiting for the summons.

True it is that some hallowed spell makes the breath of May more heavenly and inhalesome than that of any other month of the year.

The cool September breeze may be healthful and life-giving, the June morning joyous and beautiful, but a happy May-day is the more heavenly to those whose powers of perception are acute enough to discern the heavenly, and to enjoy its deliciousness.

To all, this faculty is not alike given, some, with their dulled and deadened sense of the sublime and beautiful, might stand, even at the door of Paradise, and never know the thrill of happiness which Moore's Peri felt, as the repentant tear gained her admission past the holy angel, keeping the gate to the joys beyond.

Some, whose thoughts never raise above that of duping their fellow men, and the hovel of the hog, might be surrounded by the fairest blooms of May, and the most verdant grass that ever graced the carpet of the gods, and they would see nothing in it all but "pesky weeds" or "feed for steers." While other natures, more attuned to melodies celestial, and more susceptible to the deliciousness of a supernal breath from heaven, would be moved almost to madness by the thrill of joy which would set their finely fibered souls in rapturous adoration, at the beauty and the grandeur of God's groves and lawns, on a May morning, so full of mirth and melody.

But while we leave the Merry May and her fairies sporting amid the flowers, for a time, let us see who comes yonder on the nearer margin of the landscape, with laughter and with song?

'Tis Youth. Quite youthful and gay; buoyant like boyhood, bounding onward, with a helmet of gold, a girdle of amber, and buskins of gilt, jasper and green. Fresh as the lily, and beautiful as morning, the sunshine falls in reflected rays from his suit of silvered sheen.

He prattles, he tattles, he talks to flower and fay on the way.
He joins in the gambols, the rambles, the romps of the fairies,
His eyes sparkle with life and with love.
His lips so ruby, so round, and so red,
Smile so lovely and sweet, pout and pucker so neat,
And the curls of his hair whirl in the air
Around a forehead so lovely and fair
That the birds from the tree, and the rabbits in glee
Are fluttering and skipping about him to see
The springs and the rings of his witchery.
Hark to the shout, the revel, and rout,
The romp and the pomp of the lawn round about;
Oh! isn't it fine, delicious, divine,
To look on this lovely gleam, this sport on the green,
This side of the winding-up scene?

Youth lingers along to pluck some flowers by the wayside, to love, to lisp, and be joyous and gay with laughing Nature around; and the most antic fetes doth he perform.

There is pleasure in his laugh; there is merriment in his eye, and love upon his lips. He seems to be entreating the angel of Hope to remain longer, and at the same time to be looking forward, with much joy and pleasure, to the starry lights which sparkle like crystalline caskets in the sky.

He wastes no time thinking of the dim, dark, outlines of a cloud which, e'en now, is emerging slowly into view from the bright horizon's edge, destined, ere long, to darken the sun's golden rays falliug so resplendent on his hopefulness.

Amid the flowers, the grasses and the ferns, here and there, he laughs and rambles; light of heart, fleet of limb, and sportive as the forest fawn.

This gay young trumpeter gladdens the pleasure-seekers, wizard-faced pennycatchers, and poverty-stricken penurists, who are all strolling along life's walks; some, where flowers grow; some, where damps of death are settling down; some, where chills and cheap things checker their lot.

Thus goes life, thus goes youth, and thus cometh change, the fatal change, the end all here. What a mirror presented for the reflection of eternal things!

The Merry May with all her retinue of fairies, moving over the flowers and the laughing lawns of earth, sporting amid rose leaf and lily bloom, which seem lovely as a shower of gold falling from the walls of paradise.

While gay, buoyant and hopeful youth goes bounding on, with little or no thought of the gathering cloud at the distant horizon's edge, or the approach of the two unwelcome guests who are to follow, changing the scene, changing the field, and changing the fair day.

Sport on, thou buoyant and hopeful youth. Gain golden pleasures while the mild celestial loveliness of the breeze waves thy flaxen curls, and tinges thy rounded cheek with the hues of heaven, and gives to thine elastic tread, that exquisite sensation of joy which those do not feel who have passed the dividing line between youth and age. No guest but greets thee gladly: no

grove of pleasure-seekers but makes room for thy peerless presence, and no hall hung with the richest tapestry, but holds a place in the set for thy choosing. In all departments of life's gaiety, on all occasions, thou art a welcome guest, and art tendered the most sparkling wine, the most favored place in the lady's bower.

The very atmosphere which thou breathest seems fresher and more invigorating than that inhaled by those who have reached the half-way station, the three-quarter pole, or the out-going stretch. Few shaded shapes around thee gather, and if one, perchance, should come out of the usual course, it is but to hurl a shining dart, dangerous and deadly in aim, and then away, without lingering in the back-ground, as when age is tottering to the brink.

Oh, favored one, it would almost seem in the creation of a universe, in the structure of a human kingdom, that thy place should have been perpetual, without the change which is marked on all things earthly.

Thy features, thy form and thy freshness may, perchance, have been retained to grace God's celestial system, which holds sway above the delectable hills, where the airs and the rivers bear perpetual youth to all who breathe and drink thereof, and where no decrepit shade, or sight of sadness, ever enters.

We are wont to fancy that we miss much when our youths are gone and the fingers of time become visible upon our features; but, methinks, vastly more shall we miss than the charm of perpetual youth, if we miss the gate of gold, the fount of crystal waters, or the throne of God beyond; there, all charms that enter that city of refuge, abideth forever.

What is dying here shall be living there, and sins that

are living here shall be dying there. Beautiful ending, sublime consummation of a supernal design; from the contemplation of its rare grandeurs, a thrill of life and joy will flow, which no queen of May or youthful herald hath ever known.

But, behold once again. Who is yon ancient looking form, with tottering step, and staff in hand, approaching on the nearer margin of the lawn, following in the footsteps of Youth ?

'Tis Age, with silvered head, dimmed eye, and countenance bland, void of expression. His step sounds strangely, his cough seems hollow, his bearing is bent and bowed, ancient is the garb and cravat he wears.

He looks now and then at a flower, with a sort of sorrowful smile, as he totters and hobbles on; but seldom stoops to pluck one.

Time has touched his frame with his tingling wand to leave its marks thereon. There is a kind of tremulous quiver to his hand, a perceptible shaking of the head, and an unsteadiness in his step which is painful to ponder.

He is alone, or nearly so. The rabbits have gone to the ferns, the fairies to the woods, and Merry May stands at a distance, with crest-fallen features, as if in honor of the hoary pilgrim passing. The very atmosphere seems changed to a heavier fall, and the blooms about his weary feet lie crushed and bleeding, and only now and then some fair-faced angel, or tender hand tarries long enough with him to supply some necessitous want, and then is off again. The horizon, once so beautiful and fair, hangs hazy now with slanting raindrops jetting down. The airs grow cold about him, although the May-time has not quite gone. When the sun shines through some rifted

cloud, the beams fall but to make him pine for its loveliness of other days.

The flowers beside his path look not as they used to do. With his age, they have seemed to grow old and faded, and the grass that grows between, seems more crisp, and crinkled to the touch. The once sparkling brook, upon whose bosom golden fishes used to sport and play, holds now a deadened sheen, while its waters flow on more sluggish and slowly; and when a throstle's note comes from the grove, it falls not as musical as of yore ; nor does the over-flying pigeon's wing cut the hazy vapor of the skies, with as swift a sweep as in the olden time.

He pauses, leaning on his staff now and then, to rest, to ponder, and to muse. Some bright gleams, at times, break out of the atmosphere above and beyond all mortal mouldering things, which lights up his ancient eye, and fills his faded features with a transient beam of hope ; ah, yes, transient and fleeting, soon gone, and he sinks back again into his former dream-like reverie, musing lonely over vanished visions, and the dampness of the dying day.

It seems lonely indeed, that sort of loneliness approaching sadness, to see him now in old age almost deserted, when in youth so many joyous friends flocked around to cheer.

Methinks, mankind hath far missed the true philosophy of life ; for, if ever there is a time, after the helpless days of infancy, when friends are needed, comforts required, and soothing solace eminently proper to be given, it is when our aged ones are lingering at the brink of the grave, waiting for the shadows to longer grow, and the brittle thread of life to break. It requires strong men to

compose themselves sufficiently (and such seldom do so), to prepare for the step in the dark, which lies between two eternities.

That leap from the land,
That sweep from the strand,
Which none doth understand.

How needful is the tender attention of very dear friends in the last hours of the feeble and old, standing just at the door of eternal things!

Not unfrequently, the aged father, mother, friend, is left absolutely alone in their feebleness, and how often we hear that she or he "was found dead in bed."

Found dead in bed? Yes, with sons and daughters away on the pleasure drive, getting the so-called "good things out of life," and enjoying the world as it goes.

Base ingratitude, contemptible behavior toward those aged ones, who spent the cheer and hope of their best days in caring for, and in comforting you.

How often has mother tucked the clothes around you at night, and father shown his tender care by providing for your wants, before you were old enough for a drive on life's pleasure way; at a time before you met that stranger whom you now love to the sad neglect of the aged ones at home?

At home, did I say? Yes, sometimes, and sometimes with the stranger, and sometimes gone "over the hills to the poor-house."

Oh, what a picture of sad realities such contemplations awaken! The silvered head, the bowed and bended form, and the feeble, tremulous hand, exerting its tired movements to supply the cravings of hunger, and a covering from the cold; with sons and daughters (not unfrequently) living in palatial mansions, and holding the

fêtes of the season; with no room for father or mother there.

Sad mistake; misguided son; undutiful daughter. Do you know that no mansion is too grandly furnished and no chair is too golden gilded for the occupancy of a father or mother, clad as you should clothe them? And do you know that no favorite invited one makes as becoming an appearance in the home social, as those to whom you are indebted for your life and its enjoyments? Let us, then, be very tender of those fading and faded flowers of mortality, while yet they grace our homes; for there seems to be a sort of silvered sunbeam breaking around their aged temples, which, methinks, is the flashing of that Eden fairness beyond.

But see, he is almost across the flowery lawn, and Merry May has ventured to call back her fairies, for another festival.

All seems pleasant and joyous again; for naught but the far off shadow, the dim outlines of the aged form breaks on the distant horizon; while a kind of celestial radiance lights up once more the surroundings, almost akin to that fair light which broke upon the Merry May, when she first entered on the nearer margin of the lawn, beaming like a jewel bright of hope. Even the birds have attuned their warbled notes of love and gladness once more, and the scene grows grand, glorious, gleeful, lovely.

Oh, fair appointed glimpse of heaven, mayest thou linger long; may cloud of somber hue never flit across thy brilliant pathway, through the darkling dome of heaven. May thy soft and tender music bring a charm to yon train of pleasure-seekers.

But, hist! hark! hold! what form is that which speeds like

a gloomy ghost within that distant light, breaking beyond the fair company? Ah! 'tis the spectral shade of Death, and a universal terror owns his dread approach.

The Merry May folds closer about her fragile form those robes of splendor, to guard against the chill thrown on the distant landscape. The atmosphere, once so radiant, is laden with the dews and damps of Death; and that eye of heavenly lustre, and cheek of rarest bloom, grows dim and dark, as the shade nearer comes.

> His supremest glee seems to be,
> In viewing the consternation he has made
> With her fair and tangled braid ;
> Which loosely falls, disordered now,
> About her bright angelic brow.

The air grows cold and chill; a weight is at her heart; her wrists are pulseless, and the giddy whirl of her sickening brain owns that monster's power. The receding sun, above the horizon, once so fair, sinks dimly down, and the fays and fairies hide within leaf and tree, and Cupid hath spread his hitherto useless wings, and mounts the azure heights of air.

The Virgin Spring grows crippled and old looking; a snowy whiteness tinges her locks; and she falters along like one struck of the palsy.

A cold and comfortless breeze blows from the quick movements of this monster, as he gloats with horrid glee, muttering " My time it is at merry-making; my mirthful night is here," and the very breath from his mouth chills and kills all within its compass. There is no form found within his reach, whether age or youth, bird or blossom, rabbit or roebuck, but yields to his chilling touch, and owns his dread approach.

A universal stillness seems to reign. The black orbs

of the rayless skies wander darkling in the heavens, and seem as if they were about to drop like lifeless aerolites to the joyless and dying earth. The lawn, once so fragrant and so fair, now lies in a darksome waste; every living thing within his path fades and falls, as though the shadow of a fate had told their fore-appointed doom, and some infernal sprite was playing with fair forms that else had been eternal.

He seems like a malignant deity, from some dark world of shades; brooding in his loneliness and wanton cruelty, come for Envy's self or Spitework's plague, to vex, kill, and slay forms immortal; whose loving hearts shrink from the approach of this cold and stone-like stature, terrible to the human vision. Earth's highest aspirations and most insane love of hoarded gold vanish like the mists before a July morn when the dull echo of his deadened footfalls are heard approaching.

Oh, what a thrill of horror moves the body, as the consciousness flits the intelligence home to the heart, that it must submit to his cold embraces without further delay.

To flee were vain, for he is as fleet of foot as erst engaged in the Olympic races, and much more so, for he has outrun and overtaken every athlete since those days, and it is only a question of time, when he will outstrip the whole world in this race of life and death. No cunning of man's hath devised a way round and out of his presence, other than the waking from the sleep of death that all must slumber in. No fount of youth, whose waters give perpetual healing, hath ever yet stayed his approaching steps; and at all attempts to avoid him (of course the author excepts those fortunate Bible characters who went the short way to the city celestial) when the device has failed, his laugh seemed more hollow, null,

and nerveless, as the strategist was detected and stricken down, just on the point (as he supposed) of making a discovery which would prolong both his life and his immortality here.

But, alas! No youth, no stature, no manhood, can long breathe the charnel airs, and damps, which Death breathes, and retain his life lease. Death is a monarch of frightful mien, and universal sway; whose kingdom is the surface of this world, and the realm just below, where the dead are sleeping. Where, mayhap, he goes his rounds visiting those unfortunate mortals who are buried before life is extinct, there to grapple with Death, in all the frightful horrors of being entombed alive.

He is sole monarch of a goodly kingdom; royal prince of a realm whose jurisdiction extendeth wide, the dumb god of an entranced land.

Yes, he's monarch of the lawn, and master of the Virgin Spring who hath taken flight and retreated to the far-off bounds of the landscape and who now stands in the darksome fall of night, seemingly death-struck like her companion, the Merry May.

Almost sin it is to think that two such fair and favored queens should be under the jurisdiction of such a heartless monarch, whom no mercy knows, and who listeneth not to entreaty or prayer, no matter from whose lips the same may come.

Till Death appeared upon the margin of the landscape in all his terrors, this loving company were jubilant and gay; but now, what a sad contrast? the very air has changed to gloom, and lifeless things lie turning to taint and decay, like the airs freighted with dampness from the charnel-house of death, whose rank poisons, diffused for the living to inhale, is sure to invite the unwelcome visitant.

The Merry May and the Virgin Spring turn paler and more deathlike, and they fall lifeless corpses at the same instant, clasping their hands, while Death exults with "come, my mistresses fair, to bridal-bed with me," and his very breath, as he laughs out his strange joy, seems to send a shudder to their vanishing souls, as they wing the azure heights heavenward to a brighter and a more ethereal spring.

But the mortal bodies of these two most beautiful virgins must sleep, indeed, in the bridal-bed with Death, under the mould, where hideous worms add the most loathing loneliness to that narrow house and dark.

Death stands jubilant, viewing the sad and desolate scenery around, with a kind of self-satisfied expression on his horrid visage, whose weird ugliness must have been imparted by the god that rules the lower world, for methinks no Deity of celestial lands could have conceived such an ill-shapen, ill-favored face as that, with which to curse anything of life or of motion on this terrestrial ball.

There isn't a ray of light falls through the damp darkness, as Death turns and wends back over the desolate way whence he came, to see, perchance, if his work is done well, and if no life remains in form or flower fallen beside his path.

His echoing footfalls break hollowly around the dead realm. But he's master there, and lord high king of that domain; and he seems to rule in the best of spirits, when there's no life or motion to oppose his authoritative commands, promptly given and executed by himself, with all the caprice of a heartless conscience.

Nature has, in mercy, veiled her face in impenetrable darkness, from looking on such a cheerless, sad scene,

and even the birds of passage on their way to other climes, are turned aside on their aërial flights, when they approach the outward folds of this darkness, and no Peri or ministering angel to man from the worlds of paradise is seen within that gloom.

The vivid imagination of earth's timid mortals have indeed filled the gloom and gateway hence with shades and shapes, with ghost-like goblins who keep a merry dance with death to cheer the monody of the dead reign below this animated sphere. With what horrid associations and varied forms has not superstition surrounded this monster?

I have always believed, for one, that the creation of those dread mystics arrayed in clean white grave clothes, had their origin in the wild and bewildered fancy of strangely overwrought imaginings.

Death, I believe, is the only solitary, living thing, that moves about his spectral realm, from thence to here; striking down the most blooming and buoyant of our land.

Ah, thou terrible devouring tyrant, thou insatiate monster, whence thy origin? Why hurlest thou thy invincible shafts of destruction at the fairest and most beautiful of the race? What mandate of authority dare stay thy progress or reckon the ghastly victims of thy relentless march? Why smitest thou down blooming and joyous youth bounding hopeful in the arena of life? Why hast thou introduced badges of mourning and woe into the many homes of the human family? What maliciousness prompts thy infernal will to commit daily depredations on the most beautiful forms and loving natures that the Eternal of Days has graced this earth with? Why dost thou find such supreme pleasure in hurling thy death darts

at the tender and loving blossoms which bloom about us everywhere, for, do we not need them to cheer the world with their friendliness? What soul-satisfying contentment (if, indeed, thou hast a soul,) dost thou derive in gathering to thy dark domain earth's little pledges of love?

God only knoweth thy purpose, will and pleasure, in this devastating work which thou hast thus faithfully carried on through the ages, and which thou proposeth not to abandon while a shining mark remains to tempt thy skill, and test thy archery. Thy nature must be a combination of malice, hatred and revenge, for thou takest such delight in seeing the flowers fade, and the fair ones of this floating sphere turn to mould and muteness; or, is it because, forsooth, that thou thinkest they are more charming and changeless when arrayed in the white robes which thou givest them to wear as they enter the shades of thy silent realm?

Thou monarch of the ages, how many souls hast thou hastened thither since Time told his first birthday, and the world glided into space, from the hands of that eternal first cause, God supreme of all.

Thou must have a goodly company, a numberless throng, gathered together by this time, which, mayhap, thou wilt regret to lose jurisdiction over, when the dawning begins to break through thy dull, dead realm, and the shadows therein take on celestial apparel, fit for presentation to the King of the realm of rest.

But, then, it may not be amiss that thou should'st do a little mourning, when it is remembered the mourning and the sad lamentations which thou hast caused others down through the ages.

But it is in vain to speculate about falling tears from

such a form, whose body is colder than ice, and whose heart is more stone-like than a stone; harder, deader, and more pulseless than a petrified substance which has been hardening for ages. No heart's throbbing beat ever stirs thy constitution's core, or a sympathetic thrill ever tingles thy cold, clogged veins.

Thou art the one universal enemy of mankind, the one dreaded monster of the ages. Thou consulteth no superior, and thou bowest to no inferior; thy will is a mandate, and thy malice maketh a mournful movement when erst thou passeth by; thy shades are vastly thicker peopled than the round earth to-day. Many, very many, generations sleep therein, waiting for the awakening, waiting for the end all here, the beginning of the hereafter.

But look again, at the dark and rayless lawn, and behold this horrid shape of the ages standing, for once in blank amazement, because there are no more of the company of the Merry May, or that of the Virgin Spring, to use his shining darts upon. He seems drooping and sad, because no other forms there are to furnish him pastime. He peers under his bony hand in all directions, but naught of life can he see, except, mayhap, a flitting ghost or goblin, through the rayless gloom, as gloomy looking as himself.

He lingers long enough to discover that his work is done, and well done, on that lawn, and then girds himself up, and goes skulking away to other scenes and sights, where he may ply his doleful doings of death anew.

Thus, from one place and period of time, he migrates to another country, coming and going as occasion requires, but never forgetting his task, or slighting the victims thereof. Round and round, always moving, never resting, this enemy of the ages, this shade of grizzly shapes,

this deity of devilishness keeps up his sad havoc on all beneath the sun, whether plant, flower, animal or man, whate'er there is of life hath met him in his path, and been halted quite peremptorily.

It seems like a strange spell, that which falls over the beautiful image of God, when it is borne to the silent chambers of the tomb, there to linger in that death-seeming state which nothingness knows, till a better era sets it free.

But it may be necessary for the perfecting of its spotless purity, ere it enters the gates, to take possession of that endless inheritance, where the beautiful black-eyed houris of paradise and the pardoned peris join in songs of gladness at its welcoming in.

Blessed thought, after all, grand and glorious awakening, wonderful consummation of Jehovah's stupendous plan, the crowning day, the resurrection from the dead realm of nothingness, to enter in triumphal grandeur through the gate of heaven.

Though shadows may gather here, and death may blight, at the crowning day 'twill all be past.

One moment's view of that realm so bright were worth years of the gayest pleasure-seeker's life, that ever held the queens of fashion spell-bound with his fascinating waltz. Could we but realize half of the bliss which awaits the faithful beyond the borders, methinks we'd impatient grow, and long to be off on pilgrimage, to the gates of gold.

In that region, celestial, that haven so fair, shall never come the Merry May as she cometh here, to droop and die; but we shall behold her crowned with a jasper coronet of glory, amid the fragrance and the blooms of a supernal realm, surrounded by the cherubs of heaven,

singing to the music of the chiming harebells borne on the airs of paradise, where walls of spotless purity serenely shine, and where swans of celestial seeming float on the purified lakelet's side, where silvered fishes shine in a halo of glory, all their own, and doves of snowy whiteness perch on the palm trees' leaves of every joyous grove.

What a contrast to think of, from the doom of the queen of beauty here ; what a glory of glories to behold where shining ones grace the delightful groves and the delectable mountain tops, the banks of the meandering streams and the golden floor of heaven, with the risen Son of God the center of all attraction, and the Eternal of Days supreme Ruler of the realm.

Happy, indeed, the mortal whose passport is found of sufficient whiteness to admit him at the gate of St. Peter into the joys of the circle of the sanctified; but bliss past all telling to gain that station nearest the throne of God itself.

Let the ages flit on, we can not miss that realm, if we follow the thread-like pathway which the Son of God extended from earth to heaven, when vacillating Pilate, and the clamorous mob would not be pacified without staining their unholy hands in the life stream of the only pure Being that ever set foot upon our soil, or found a bed with beasts of burden.

What a meeting for Prince and persecutors that last great meeting will be, before the final separation takes place! He to witness the glorious triumphs of His death, they to receive their sentence of doom for the eternal years.

Let us then, my dear reader, live so faithful and so faultless that when the crowning day shall come, our pass-

port will be taken at the gate of gold, for no supremer purpose can engage the attention of an immortal soul than the securing of that realm of rest for an inheritance down through the ages, endless and eternal, where the common enemy of mankind shall never enter to mar or to maim through Eternity's celestial horologe.

LEAH, QUEEN OF WONDERLAND.

In the Western Wonderland, amid its crags and peaks of mountain scenery, is located a valley verdant with bloom; where clear and limpid streams go rippling over sands of gold; breathing a kind of subdued music on the radiant atmosphere, to the distant hills around.

It was once my lot, in rambling, to enter this sequestered vale, with jaded horse and hound, at the close of a tiresome day's sport in hunting the fleet-footed deer, which, by wily turns, and native strategy, led my tried and tested horse far past the outmost stretch of comrade's course that day.

A spring of clearest crystal, babbling 'neath the branches of a lotus tree, served to slake the thirst of horse, hound and man. And, in native clover beds, my steed fed free, unhampered by saddle-girth or bridle-rein, while tired of the chase, my hound (one of St. Hubert's breed), rested neath the shade of a cypress near at hand.

But enchanted with the region so beautiful and fair, I wandered forth with fowling-piece to the margin of a lake whose broad expanse of waters seemed the embodiment of a celestial silence, shaded with a saintly shadow bearing inland in a skiff which betokened the finishing art of the red man.

Upon a nearer view, I beheld its sole and lone occupant to be a beautiful Indian maiden, of some seventeen summers, paddling gracefully to a sort of foot landing, near where my fancy had led me. In breathless silence I stood, fearing that a stir or whisper from me might alarm the fair form, like an angel of the lake and land which came curving shoreward with graceful sweep, parting the shining waters with silver tipped canoe. When, upon approaching the bank, she gracefully cast from her lifted hand a rope of golden threads, woven and inter-woven by skilled and careful hands, as a fastening for her boat.

Then, with graceful bearing, she stepped lightly on the bank, revealing a wealth of raven hair and form of female loveliness which I had never beheld among the pale faces or any of the daughters of Eve. From her beaming orbs of darkened hue were emitted lovely splendors which the satiated sycophant of fashion never sees.

Thereupon, removing my hat, as if addressing the queen of that lake and land, I said, with becoming modesty:

"Pardon this intrusion, but, wearied with the chase, I've wandered here delighted as one who wanders among the spirit lands in quest of some mortal amusement to cheer the tedium of the hour; I pray thee, Princess, pardon this informal and flustered introduction."

Whereat, she answered with a tone of soul-enchanting eloquence: "Leah mondea morea sofella safee," pointing to the lake and sky, more angelical than earthly.

Whereupon, addressing my enchantress once again, I said: "Is this wonderland, and art thou its queen?"

When, in tone milder, if possible, than before, she replied, "Leah mondea morea sofella safee."

Ah, what would I have not given to understand the purport of the mystic speech which I there heard, knowing full

well that it was no Indian dialect known to our Western border, much less a language of the pale faces known to civilized man.

But again, attempting to fathom the mystery of the loveliness which stood before me, I sought an approach, saying, "Is thy home on the waters, or in the wood? Art thou mortal or mystic mistress of this realm? Speak, that I may understand, and worship thee."

Thereupon, she hastily raised the golden rope, stepped into her silvery canoe and shot from the shore like a startled swan, saying, "Leah mondea morea sofella safee," and waving adieu, that form of loveliness was lost forever to my mortal eye amid the gathering darkness settling on the lake so noiseless and so still.

But to the eye of my soul she was not lost, for, amid varying vistas of golden shafted trees and lawns of greenest verdure, I fancied a throne was builded by the naiads of wonderland for this queen so graceful and so rare.

Long I gazed on the lake and on the land for her return. And on the morrow I went in quest of interpreter among the natives of that mountainous region to explain the meaning of the words which fell from the lips of that lovely queen, to me a riddle, and to them a superstition of awe which none could fathom. And, on recurring times, I visited that valley in quest of adventure, perchance again to find the fairy enchantress who spoke those words which stirred my soul, but in vain. I never beheld her more.

I have fancied her queen of wonderland and named her "Leah," because of the soft sounding words which fell from her lips. And, ever and anon, as I wend along the sequestered lane of life, in quest of fair and favored mortals, there glides before my fancy the beautiful, mystified

maiden, Leah, Queen of Wonderland, an image which I have worshiped with all the ardor of a rapt soul. And oft will arise the silent inquiry amid the far off flights of thought, "Why doth the god of beauty show to mortals only such glimpses of a realm of grandeur, whose fair and shining ones are heavenly heralds of the soul's pursuit after love, shadowed from the realm of their coming to the better nature of man?" Who shall answer?

THE WHITE WITCH OF THE MOUNTAINS.

MANY years ago, in the Wild West, it was my fortune to have been on an excursion and exploration tour in, over, round and about the Rocky Mountains.

Being of a meditative mood of mind, it was my greatest delight to separate myself from all companions, at times, and select the wildest and most wonderful wastes, the grandest, most stupendous and towering mountain tops, the most secluded and silent recesses of nature, for my rambling reveries. I loved the morning's first approach and the eventide's retiring day, in which to exercise the diviner moods of mind that mountain scenery oft awakened in me.

One morn, hours before light, I left the sleeping camp of my four companions and stole silently away to North Park, some three miles distant, to meander and meditate. Although the prospect of a lone journey three miles through the mountains before morn was not pleasant, still I held, and do now think, that the tourist loses much of the mild beauties of nature when he misses his musings at such hours.

The eastern heavens were just aglow with the first approach of the fair-faced Aurora as I reached my objective

point. First, I paused on a small elevation at the south side of the Park and gazed with infinite satisfaction upward on the starry worlds, which seemed like shining islands located in the shoreless ocean of space. The moon had passed beneath the horizon, which still held traces of her lingering light. From thence I wended through the centre of the Park in a northeasterly direction; then, turning to the left, westwardly and south, I rambled and rambled, ruminating of the delicious richness of the realm around me.

Morn was nearing. I thought: "What a sheltered, shaded retreat this spot of earth would be for a home! If no Indian molested, how happily two loving lives might be passed here in the rearing of a family that had never been contaminated with the wiles of the world!"

Thus I mused and meditated, when quite unexpectedly I beheld a mythical looking female, with a red turban wound about her forehead, a scarlet seeming shawl thrown lightly over her shoulders; a dress of buckskin bedecked with stars and golden nuggets.

She approached. I would have fled, but her keen, dark eye was upon me. On second thought, why should I run? I was armed and out for adventure; and here was an opportunity to satiate my soul's wildest wishes for romance with a living representation of my mind's ideality in that direction. But, when within two rods of me, instead of approaching nearer, she raised her white hand (for she was a white woman) cautiously and wafted me adieu. Turning suddenly to the right she began a walk, round and round, which terminated in the most wonderfully complex multiplicity of circlings that I had ever beheld, seemingly to no purpose.

In mute amazement I beheld her while she still kept

wending, wandering and winding, round and round. I had heard of "The WhiteWitch of the Mountains." "Can this be she?" thought I. I spake; she heeded not. I approached. She paused, raising a forbidding finger. I halted. Again she took up her windings; and again I advanced a step or two. Again she halted, and with a defiant stamp of her foot wafted me away, and fled up the mountain side with the speed of the wind. Oh, fate of fates! I'd driven her away; and my soul had learned to love her—or, rather, the mystery in which she was involved. The vision of her star-bespangled dress; her glowing features, radiant as the rainbow, hid in a wavy net-work of curly, dark hair, strangely bewitched me. Lingering but a moment, I pursued; but not with the fleetness at which she had vanished. No untrained foot could have ascended that mountain height at the speed with which she went to its summit, and from thence out of sight like a flash. I gained the summit, but no vision of her was seen. I raised my voice, saying: "I would not injure—come thou and talk with me."

The echoes of my own voice were all that broke the brooding stillness round. I wended some distance amid the mountain tops and crags, but could not find foot-print or form of my vanished enchantress.

I returned to the Park below and lingered there for hours, but she did not come. I wended back to camp, reaching the same when the clock was on the stroke of twelve. I told my experience. There was a Pawnee Indian and a white trapper among the number, and they each simultaneously said: "She is the White Witch of the Mountains," and often has been seen wandering round and round, but never speaks to any one. No foot in these parts is fleet enough to find her burrow."

I went the next morning at the same hour, and lingered far past sunrise, but she came not. I repeated this sort of thing until nine fair morns had come and gone, but never saw her more.

Ah, how often have I regretted that I did not let her finish her windings and wanderings undisturbed! For then she might have approached and given me, with her own voice, the notes of an immortal song. But my act, in this regard, is much like man's in all the affairs of life. He wants that which he has not, and soon wearies with that which he has.

'Tis my resolve, should I ever be permitted the pleasure of visiting the Rocky Mountains again, to make, unattended, another morning ramble to North Park, with the hope of once again beholding the kindly features of "The White Witch of the Mountains," whose mystic shadow is engraven on the mirror of my soul.

Was she a reality, or an apparition from the realm of the wonder world? Time alone may untangle the deep perplexities of the problem.

ROME AND HER GREATNESS.

Rome!

At the mere mention of that word, what memories cluster around the student's desk, suggesting at once the city of the Cæsars, the mother of empires, the cradle of arts, and the mighty storehouse of human wisdom. The dreamings of fancy, the retrospections of memory, the mighty feats of the amphitheatre, and the mischiefs of maddened monarchs: all these remembrances and many more cluster around that doomed city, now desolate and dead in the dust of her greatness. All eyes are turned to her historic records searching for knowledge concerning the management of monarchies, aristocracies and republics; and is it strange that we seek counsel of her who hath so influenced and shaped the destinies of mankind; and, mayhap, to some extent, the duration of the world? Roman history is the grandest human record ever penned for the guidance of statesmen in governmental affairs. Then why may not all people and classes turn over those dust-brown leaves with interest and pursue its pages with profit?

Gibbon, her greatest historian, may be studied by the most widely informed statesman with profit, from whence he may learn the wisest and most enlightened civil policy. In the rise, progress and decline of her single state he traces the different workings of human government.

The history of Rome teaches the statesman to feel that it is indeed "dulce et decorum pro patria mori"; and from lessons of her worthiest citizens he is taught to emulate the steady devotion of Camillus and the strict integrity of Cincinnatus.

From the compilation of Rome's laws down to her fall, no citizen of her extended empire ever bore a grievance which her courts were inadequate to redress, or ever refused to redress did he but submit to their jurisdiction.

From the campaigns of the mighty Cæsar and the brilliant achievements of Anthony the soldier gains a profound knowledge of the art of war; while from the Pandects of Justinian the judge and jurist is imbued with the soundest principles of law and equity to guide aright the civilian and soldier amid the vicissitudes of peace and war; while the poet in his unhampered imagination climbs Parnassian heights in the companionship of her Virgil, where the Muses play around the purest fountains of the Helicon.

What a land for a dreamy, sentimental songster, this land of the seven wonders of the world was before the dim shade of adversity settled down on her effulgent brightness. What a realm Rome was in her palmy days for the votary of wisdom and the soft, admiring, dreamy, twilight eyes of Love to look upon; when her Tiber wafted the spotless breast of the swan ashore like ripples from a silvery lake, as some gondola aglow with an Italian sunset went floating along, timed by the lover's lute and watched by angel eyes.

Here the Christian, side by side with the sandaled monk, looks with the keenest interest back, far back, into the shaded gloom of her history to find the angel form of Religion standing amid the ruins of Rome with her bridal

robes donned and sparkling like the dews of the morning. Here he traces her as she emerges from the horrors of relentless persecution and bloodshed out of the dismal night of Paganism up to the dawning sunlight of effulgent glory as the Gospel notes of the Son of God break on the world.

There is hardly a virtue which has honored or a vice which has disgraced our human nature; hardly a character of manliness which commands our admiration, or in the depraved depths of its own malignity which receives our scorn, that has not its prototype in Rome.

The enraptured soul of the divinely gifted artist, in his wildest flights of imagination, has never conceived images of more surpassing beauty or grandeur than those which glow with a God-like touch on the canvas of her painters, or become immortalities in marble by the chisels of her sculptors. The richest, rarest fancy that ever reveled in magnificent creations, aided by the divinity within, hath never builded in the regions of air, gilded domes, minarets or castles more supremely splendid than those which covered the Palatine from the Capitoline heights overlooking august and imperial Rome in the days of her mightiness and her grandeur. On the pages of time's record is found no picture so absorbing as the Mistress of the World presents at the height of her power and the limitless latitude of her sway.

Circumscribed within the limits of forty-eight miles was reared the city which Augustus "found brick and left marble"; and concentrated there was the choicest treasures of all the civilized globe. Along its beautiful streets and walk-ways were builded palaces of imperial splendor; and from its heights rose temples, rare, magnificent, consisting of mosque and minaret, marble-domed, whose

spires gleamed with gold, sending a celestial sheen adown its long, lengthened defiles to dazzle the eye of the beholder, no matter at what distance he might be approaching. Its altars bent beneath the weight of trophies, from the bow and arrows of the Scythian hunter to the gemmed and golden vessels of the Temple at Jerusalem.

In every street, on every hill top, in each direction, were seen indications of wealth and grandeur. Here a towering archway, there a grand amphitheatre; here a commemorative pillar, there a triumphal column; here the arena where the gladiators met, and there where the senators of Rome assembled to dictate their policy to the world.

The population of Rome at times was turbulent and unjust; but they possessed two most noble characteristics—a lofty pride of citizenship which nothing could eclipse or subdue, and an energy which nothing could resist or daunt.

From this regal centre; from this citadel of the seven hills; from this stronghold of creation; from this intellectual resort of culture, refinement, art, and indomitable obstinacy, the radii of her greatness penetrated all the world; Rome's legions paraded in every land; the wonderful wisdom of her sages made her a forum of fame far renowned; the sword of her warriors opened the way for the use of her wisdom in the subjugation of crude Nature herself with the refining influence of education. When her soldiers triumphed they gave the codes of her jurists to the vanquished, and the religion of her divines to mankind.

The causes of her downfall have been investigated and speculated upon by abler writers than I, whose attention has been occupied for generations. In determining the

real cause of her downfall and decay it would seem that but little reason is required.

From the appearance of Romulus to the fall of Rome, her great concerns and affairs were managed and directed by that Unknown God to whom the altar of the Acropolis was ignorantly inscribed, in the fulfillment of whose purposes nations are but instruments and their lifetime as but a day. The power of Rome had banded as with a band of iron the nations together, so that their communication and intercommunication was possible; she had made the distant near, and the mighty of other lands meek and submissive to the nod of her monarchs; for leaders, rulers and subjects everywhere paid adoration and homage to the mandates of her monarchs, and only now and then some desperate brigand or some renegade outlaw was foolhardy enough to assail her imperial potentates, or her impregnable fortresses and walls to reap the harvest of death as a result of his own rashness, by finding a grave of glory without her gilded gates. But time is the great leveler of all things; and she, too, had fulfilled her appointed days, and the stupendous fabric of her unmeasured greatness was tottering to its fall. The Cross swept on in the path of the Eagle; the trained soldiers of Christianity were pressing to the point of death the legionaries of imperial Rome.

In this city of the Cæsars were waged perhaps the most skillful intellectual contests that have ever been exhibited to the world from the stage of mind power. In this imperial centre, fortified and fenced in by a wall of impregnable structure, some of the most astonishing athletic feats and physical performances have been entertained that have ever been held. Some of the most daring exploits of venture in the pen where enraged animals were

goaded on to acts of frenzy by poisoned darts, hurled from hands arrayed against their lives, before the applauding multitudes that oft assembled such sports to see; here the trained gladiators met for mortal combat where fair women and proud men were the auditors; and in this royal and magnificent city were ofttimes assembled the elite of life in the social circle, or at the grand ball where the revel and the dance flowed on unconfined till the morning mists veiled their forms before Aurora's coming. Here the restless, swaying, pleasure-seeking throng would, under the mild evening starlight, go forth in quest of adventure through her crowded thoroughfares, or out beyond the city's walks into the green fields of nature, smiling with the flower, the mistletoe and the creeping vine, those ornaments with which God has decked the world. The climate, the landscape and meandering rivers of that romantic region gave health, beauty and pleasure to the populace.

And especially was the pleasure-seeker pleased with the scenes of that fallen empirage in the days of her greatness and renown. Over that greatest of earth's cities descended the gods of ancient fable in their strifes for the mastery of mortals engaged in warfare. Here many deities were formed and worshiped, according to Roman mythology; and Superstition oft, with her wild wonderments, led her train of goblins along under cover of her hills and the sable brow of Night. In this mighty city died many a hero for the faith of Christ and the freedom of the soul, who lies forgotten amid her moldering ruins; and now the swaying winds waft a saddened requiem over desolate walks, which reach the antiquarian's ear as he exhumes some relic of other days from her ruins.

What numberless hosts have not been elated with

ambition's maddening thrill within her gates! What numberless peasants, poor and forlorn, have not plied their daily care for food within her borders! And what a multitude of alms-askers have not thronged her thoroughfares in quest of some generous soul, begging for a farthing or a bit of bread to keep the body alive! What numberless myriads now sleep within her silent shades forgotten who were once animated with motions divine!

Such is ruined Rome, buried in the tomb of her greatness, silent in the shade of her shadow.

But let us glance at the remains of the renowned city of antiquity as the traveler finds it to-day. Let us take our first look of its whole extent from the eminence of Albano, whose wooded heights makes this location attractive; for the hues of the varying foliage, bathed in the autumn's haze, seem half heavenly.

There on the right, upon the slope of the hill, stands the old Tusculum, while above and beyond it lies the site of Hannibal's most celebrated Italian camp, whence the retreating general looked out for the last time on the rival of Carthage; and on the left the Campagna rises away, bare and unbroken, to Ostia, whose shadows mingle with the silvered sheen of the Mediterranean Sea.

Farther on, almost hid in woods, lies Tivoli, with its valley gleaming like gold and glancing Cascatelles. Yonder, on the plain below, stretches Lake Regillus, and just here beneath us lies the vast and varied plateau where the old city stood, strewn with "fallen column, capital and fane." Yonder the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla rise massive in their molderings; and yonder the irregular arches of the Old Aqueduct run. In that field there stands the Tomb of the Scipios, "whose sacred urn contains no ashes now," but the ground is sacredly remembered

by every Roman and honored by many tourists as a kind of holy enclosure; and yonder Oasis, amid the "Desert of Ruin," is the sacred and sanctified grove where Numa communed with his divine counselor. And the crystal waters of Egeria's Silent Spring "bubble from the base of the cleft statue." Yonder round tower of other times, entwined with "three thousand years of ivy," holds the urn of Cecilia Inetella; and away in the distance the pyramid of Caius Cestus appears, with well defined outlines on the azure hue of the skies, which seems like a living language waiting for some master to read the record of the darkened, or the lightened, days when that stupendous work of art was builded, now effaced from the ledger of life by the dust of ages gone; and there lies Rome, with her crowded habitations and her moldering ruins; her towers and her temples; her bright spots and her shaded avenues; her green lawns and desolate doorways; and yonder through her midst flows the flashing Tiber, like a thread of silver gleaming in the sunlight of a mid-summer's day; and yonder rises Monte Vaticano heavenward, as if upheaved by Titan hands.

This and much more breaks on the eye of the beholder to gladden, or to sadden, the soul, so near related to that greatness and that ruin.

What a place for contemplation this renowned city of the fallen Cæsars is! What a mute mightiness broods over this sleeping Mistress of the World! What a beautiful halo of supernal splendor the poetic soul sees in the great train of events which centre round this emporium through the shades and shadows of the entombed years, as at will he ranges in unrestrained ramblings through her walks and her wonders! Ah, yes! this silent city of the Orient furnishes food for thought inexhaustive and

limitless to the most gifted mind power that the Eternal of Days ever concentered in matter.

Rome is not a beautiful city, situated, as it is, in the midst of a barren and almost level campagna, which surrounds it as a sort of seeming desolation. It is more beautiful viewed from the elevation from which we have looked down upon it than from any other point of the compass. Indeed, a bird's-eye view of the city is always more attractive than an actual sight derived from a view of her ruins seen as one walks amid her entombed greatness, musing of the mighty masters who once thrilled the world with their eloquence and her fame. From a distance the traveler is favorably impressed with a kind of fancied glory that lights up her ruins; but as he enters the "Eternal City" he finds that the streets are dark and narrow, hardly better than what we call alleys in America. The houses are old and time-worn looking, and in certain parts of the city much filth abounds, showing that the city officials are lax and indolent so far as cleanliness is concerned.

Like all capitals on the Continent, it has its great street, where may be seen its fairest stores, shops, wares, commodities and merchandise. There may be seen at times its greatest concourse of people, promenading for profit or for pleasure.

The great street of Rome is called the "Corso," and runs from the northern extremity to the foot of the Capitoline Hill, paved with round stones, and has sidewalks only a part of the way.

Through the morning and afternoon it is rather quiet, and viewed at such a time one could form but a faint conception of the population; but as the sun is sinking, and the cool, revivifying breath of the perima sera, laden with

freshness and perfumes from the Alban hills, fans the fevered brow expectant with the thrill of approaching pleasure, and from the heights of Soracte pours onward a current of life which affords the curious a good opportunity for beholding the populace of Rome attired in fustian and in lace, in beaver and broadcloth, in jewels and in gems, in rags and in ribbons; they hustle and bustle along on foot and in grand equipages, with prancing steeds accoutered in shining plate, flashing back the sinking sun's reflected rays like a halo of glory breaking round a tomb of gold. The tradesman who has plied his avocation all day long in the spacious room or dingy den, now walks forth with the outlines of his pursuit plainly visible to the expert beholder on his features. At this hour the beggars, numerous and motley, who have lain in the shade of some protection against the heat of the sun through the day, go forth to dog the steps of the passers-by until charity, as a virtue, seems to lose its dignity and become a necessity; for many a man and woman gives more to stop the wierd wailings, which grate harshly on the ear, than to satiate the thirstful wants of the dejected wanderer, who often might be something in the world if soap, sand and a little determination was deemed more of a requisite to success by that class who seem never to wish for a higher station in life than that of beggars when once they have become associated with such persons.

On the steps of every temple of worship may be seen prostrate forms of the lower classes of the inhabitants bowed in the humblest attitudes, which often excites sympathy but seldom commands respect. Among those worshipful myriads may ever be found rare specimens of human misery which the philanthropic soul might generously grieve over till its own glorious star of promise

would the brighter grow in the constellation of the immortals.

By far the greater number of worshipers are of the female class, which is true of Catholic and Protestant countries generally.

In the church may be found, seeking spiritual comfort, the greater number of those who from the superior purity of their lives it would seem have the least need of the ministrations of the church.

I don't wish, however, to be understood as saying that all the devout followers of the Son of God are women; for many a true and manly man is building a mansion of glory for the habitation of the soul in that sun-land beyond the tide; in that realm beyond the rest of death, where darkness broods like the ebon wings of night; in that haven of the hereafter where harps of holy chord and lutes of lisping love shall speed away the ritual of a deathless dawn.

There often may be found in those worshiping assemblages of earthly saints the lofty lady, made lofty by golden filigrees and laces, kneeling beside the humblest peasant, when the peasant's title to that mansion in the skies is by far the better of the twain. Broadcloth doesn't weigh in the scale where God's executors adjudge as to what constitutes a proper passport into the city of the New Jerusalem.

But from the altar let us hence to the Corso, which is alive with carriages and curricles of every shade, shape and description.

From the entrance to every palace comes dashing a stylish equipage, with an accoutered coachman whose uniform shines like that of a field-marshal's, attended by footmen pampered and fed like puppets for a fair's day,

and well trained in the art of politeness and palaver; onward go the royal roadsters at a brisk pace, with their driver and the lackies on the footboard ready to perform any feats of agility to please their proud possessors, who sit like earthly lords and ladies surveying the small fry swarming and floating round them like moths maddened by the source of the sunbeam which they never can find.

In that grand equipage may ride a Cardinal who is wending his way to the Pope of Rome, whose mission is some mighty reform in church or state.

Yon dorsky, drawn by four prancing dapple-grays, is the property of some Russian Princess on the parade for pastime. This low box of a carriage, so low that its floor is almost on a level with the street, rolling along with a kind of conscious comfort, is the Brougham of some foreign millionaire. Yonder soiled and shaded hack is controlled by a party of Yankee boys, dressed in a sort of happy-go-lucky style, who feel as independent as any of Rome's potentates, but not half so pompous in appearance; and yonder exquisite barouche, gilt with gold, before which those six beautiful horses are curvetting and prancing beneath the crack of the driver's whip, who is dressed in a jacket of softest silk and breeches of white enameled leather, cap banded with gold, postilion boots, and belt of bronze, belongs to the lady occupant of that princely family of Borghese, who is a model type of the female beauties of Rome.

But the grand equipages and vehicles of fashion and fineness which may be seen on the Corso upon any fine evening in the year, is too numerous for the writer to make particular mention of in detail. Suffice it to say that every kind and description of a vehicle, from a painted coach down to the Mexican wooden ox-cart, may be seen; and

to the eye of a stranger the streets of Rome appear to contain every description of human personage who is possessed of more means than which may be found sufficient to keep the wolf from the door, with some sort of a roll-away giving rein to rackers on the drive.

The object, no doubt, of the greater number who thus spend their evenings is to "cut a swell" in the fashionable world, and 'tis better to be thus engaged than to bear a hand in some darker game of life where lust and love may lie.

While this endless chain of rolling vehicles is whirling around the Coliseum, let us take a look at the vast assemblage of people who have met at the Piazza del Popolo to learn and discuss the news of the day.

This "Square of the People," as it very properly has been called, is a sort of semi-circle of some extent, surrounded by beautiful and uniform buildings. At one end of the same, stand two elegant churches, which seem to have been designed by the same skilled architect on the same extensive plan; while at the other, opens one of the city's most beautiful gates to the touch of those who lift its golden rod, which causes a sort of silver sounding to run adown the fane-like fancy work where its hinges are fastened; while at the other extremity, which is more central than those before mentioned, the three principal streets of Rome diverge in different directions.

Amid this enclosure may be seen various sparkling fountains, decorated with statues of beautiful design; while in the centre towers an obelisk of darksome granite transported from the land of Egypt by Augustus and covered with unintelligible hieroglyphics, which are Greek to all save the disciples of Champolion.

This great square is a very fashionable, and a very

unfashionable resort, both for the refined and for the rustic classes of Rome. Here, as in the assemblages of the Corso, may be seen all shades of manhood and of womanhood, from the highest to the lowest types of Oriental lands. Here may be seen well-dressed business men, sometimes with their families and sometimes without them, strolling leisurely for ejoyment around the enclosure, courteous and kindly disposed. Here saunter saintly priests clad in their clerical robes, shaven and shorn like Simon Simpleton of other times; while now and then may be seen "Venerable Padres," who are begged by many for a blessing almost at every step. Here too may be seen numberless students of the Propaganda, clad in black gowns with silken head-dresses, representatives of various nations. One may see pilgrims of Mahomet's hegira still journeying to the sacred Mecca of the church, with scallop, staff, shell, and sandals, which indicate a journey from some distant province of Arabia, for the gratification of the faithful, and the satisfaction of their caliph, through whose instrumentality may be gained the grace of God and the favor of the black-eyed nymphs, or heavenly houris of paradise, with which the Moslems have peopled it.

Monks, maidens, mischief-makers, move mutely on, unctuous and odoriferous, attractive and repulsive, winsome and wicked, worshipful and worldly, all are out and on the parade. Campagna Herdsmen, long, lank, and lean embodiments of human wretchedness, are there waiting and wondering like the rest. Mountaineers of Albano, aglow with health and possessing that ruddy, open appearance of countenance which always impresses one so favorably, whether at home or abroad, and which we meet with in every crowd as we go journeying the world around.

Rare models for the sculptor, these hardy Mountaineers from Albano are arrayed in costumes peculiar to their calling, with steeple-crowned hats of white felt and tastily tricked off with changeable ribbons, short pantaloons of corduroy, unbuttoned at the knee, with crimson sash about their waists, and shoes shining brightly with silver buckles, and shirt collars tastefully turned over their broad shoulders, shows them off to a very marked advantage amid all this wild unrest of nature's pedestrians, on the parade for pleasure within the Eternal City of the Cæsars, at that hour when the last lingering rays of the receding sun gild dome and minaret with liquid loveliness under Italian skies.

Such a scene seems seraphic; and do not those flashes of resplendent glory which break out of the fleecy clouds hovering above this scene of animation, which are reflected from the earthly sun's rays mingling with the light of the eternal sheen, shadow forth to man somewhat of the greatness and the grandeur of the city built beyond the border of that darkly flowing Jordan which awaits wanderers for passage thence? Do not the rebuilding of Rome's gates and palaces on the grave of her greatness shadow forth that life principle of immortality within the breasts of her founders which is above decay and death? And does not the onward march of Time moving amid her moldering columns and castles built in Cæsar's day, move mightily the memory of the student of nature, or the historian, as he stands amid the ruins of fallen Rome, as he pens undying leaflets for the reading of future ramblers to the silent realm of reposing greatness?

Ah, indeed was Rome great! And indeed is she great to-day, sitting as she does on the silence of the greatest glory and grandeur, gone back to earth, that the world

has ever seen in any of its great and heroic stages. It seems like wending amid the walks of wisdom closed by some eternal fiat or decree, to stroll in meditative mood through Rome's gateways on a ramble of rest; to contemplate, e'en though feebly it be, the dim outlines of her entombed greatness; the dead silence of her death reign; the sightless stillness of her seeming solemnity, and the brooding monody of her ancient mirth, madness and mightiness, as one rests on some reclining marble monument the better to hear the deep silence of her breathing, buried in the dust of the crumbled couch on which she reposes.

Little doth that person understand the moods of the soul and the master emotions of the mind who has never found food for thought where such ruins lie. Feebly is the immortality within stirred at the monody of rural life when compared with the wild surges of the soul as its possessor stands amid the ruins of Rome; such scenery and surroundings will cause it to long for an escape from the prison house of its detention and join the deathless duration of the dimmed glory in which her heroes live and move, though the habiliments of mortality which they wore have long since gone to form the mud which cements Rome's marble mansions, or the grassy lawns which lie so green around her amber lighted sepulchres.

The traces of time, that mighty leveler of all things, may be plainly tracked round and about the ruins of Rome; this agent of demolition and reconstruction is ever at his work; pulling down, building up, year in, year out, he follows his ceaseless toil; through summer's heat, and through winter's cold; up the hill, and down the hill; at the dawning, and at the darkening, his busy fingers work while we are sleeping, and while we are

waking his horologe runs on. He buildeth monuments, and demolishes domes. He reaps the ripened grain, and cuts down the green with the same sickle ; never resting, but always ranging over flowery ground, when flowers are in sight, and swans are at play ; changing life, changing death, changing nature, and changing destiny, bent and bearded though he be ; too ancient looking for love to lisp his praise ; too relentless for man to baffle, and too skilled for cunning to curb. Thus goes Time treading on, looking, peering and veering round the round world, as well as the ruins of Rome ; waiting to make or to mar, as the needs of the hour seem to require. The centuries have seen him at his work, never flagging, never lagging, always abreast of the times.

> Sorrowing and silvering as he goes,
> The heart with grief, and the head with snows.

Nowhere better than in this city of the ages, may be seen plainly marked the course of this ancient patriarch in his ceaseless walks, where man moves, and mold makes the mound. There are time-tattered temples yet visible in Rome, which one would think had resisted his ravages long, and might outlive his lengthened span, but no ; mud and marble must be moved by his might, for the eternal morrow's merry-making farther on. And how soon a life is past ; how soon a city dies, and how soon Time dims the golden urn ; how soon the crowns of monarchs are handed round from one to another in that play where Destiny deals out dangers to empires and to kingdoms. What seems eternal here holds no duration lease whose seal secures any lengthened tenure from Time, for he is a relentless landlord, taking cereal and cereal tender, the same. The stars shine in the azure

skies after nightfall sets in ; the rivers run onward to the ocean; the seas send their sheen ahead, and silver in the moonlight with shimmering softness amid the low murmuring breezes of heaven, which blow a bloom to the cheek from the land of health that one would think could never fade. But these things shall change, for walketh (though unseen he be) by the side of every bloom and of every beauty, this same ancient monarch called Time, culling the fairest fruit, and making up his list of movables ready for silent transportation thitherward whene'er the mystery of his mind shall give the mandate out.

The Italians, like the French people, are lively and mirth-loving. Especially is this true of the inhabitants of Naples, Florence, Milan and Venice; but at Rome there is a kind of melancholy reserve, an inate dignity of demeanor, and an air of silent sorrow which is striking in the extreme. They seem like a people bound down 'neath the weight of some former sorrow, or of some past calamity, the shade of whose shadow still saddens the soul; and it is only upon rare occasions that they are stirred to an extravagance of mirth and merry-making, such as the Carnival, or the Holy Week, which they observe so punctually.

Travelers are loth to account for this quite perceptible difference in the same climate, with reference to the manner in which that Eastern people conduct themselves. May we not, however, account for it on the theory that there still ebbs in the veins of the people some of the old Roman blood which moved the masters of the world to those sublime deeds of daring, which startled the civilized globe, when Rome was at her zenith of glory and renown ? The memory of what she once was and the realization of what she is now, casts a sort of somber

shadow over the souls of her sons. Could it reasonably be expected that such a people would forget the greatness of their ancestors' deeds and daring in the frivolities of later life? Fallen greatness is a famishing feast to the body and a cruel fetter to the soul, and no son of woman born (if he be a man) loves to rest in leisure and lesser greatness than the parentage who begat him. Therefore, when we reflect, it is not strange that there is this marked contrast between the people of Rome and the inhabitants of the Italian climate generally.

It is true that to-day the traveler may see in Rome beautiful villas, parks of noble trees with fleet footed deer chasing through their green depths, aviaries filled with birds of varying plumage and of every variety of hue; verdant lawns with fountains jetting up sparkling water; lovely walks, shaded from the noontide sun by the interlaced branches of the pine, laurel and the cypress, with statues at regular intervals amid the shrubberies, silvered and soft of that Italian clime; mimic theatres, beautiful domes, endless labyrinths, fairy bowers decked with golden, glowing tapestry; beautiful gardens, and golden, gilded grottoes; swans at play on silvered waters, and green o'erhanging arches which reflect the liquid blue of the Eden beyond. But amid it all there lies those ancient ruins—fragment of crumbling wall and torn temple, tower defaced where the twining vine seems creeping cautiously over its crumbling greatness; some silvered urn, despoiled by time, which holds the mortal remains within the shaded cemeteries of the mighty fallen in the fetters of fated Rome.

These are sorrowful spectres to the sons of Rome, which daily cast their deadening blight from infancy to age on their souls. It has been said by those who have made

reliable research in and about the ruins of Rome, that many, very many, of her truly Roman sons, since the decline and fall, have sought asylums in other lands to be relieved from the pain of looking on the dim death-walks of their fathers and the shrouded greatness of their glory. Such is the human make-up, and is it any wonder that it should be so? Nay, is it not rather a commendable trait of character? For what son can better reflect than on the virtues and the vanities of ancestry gone ; of a powerful race swept to the abodes of the past, pulseless particles of a painless peace?

But let us slowly wend our way towards St. Peter's, viewing the scenes as we go; for he who visits Rome without viewing St. Peter's, misses half the benefits derived from a perusal of his sketch-book, when he returns to the quiet of his country to reflect over the splendors of castles, old in story, which he has seen abroad.

From the Villa Borghese one must traverse a greater portion of the city in order to come in near proximity to St. Peter's dome.

As he crosses the Tiber by the Ælian bridge, the first object of note which falls upon his view is the Castle of St. Angelo, the present prison-house of Rome, which was builded by the Emperor Hadrian, and was originally designed as a resting place for the distinguished dead. It is of circular formation, about two hundred and twenty feet in diameter, and rests upon huge rocks of Peperino stone. It was changed to a fortress or prison-house during the siege of Rome by the Goths in the year 537. Some considerable alterations have since been made during the pontificates of Urban and of Alexander in surrounding it with a deep ditch, and in surmounting it with a brick

superstructure. During Holy Week this fortress of St. Angelo is made memorable by the grand display of fireworks which usually takes place on the Monday night succeeding Holy Friday, as a sort of purifying sanctification to the heavenly work in hand. At these Pyrotechnic displays an immense concourse of people line the opposite bank of the Tiber, where houses are decorated and lighted from parapet to basement, stages are erected in the centre of grand squares, boats are seen upon the waters, and many a shift and device is resorted to in order to accommodate the curious (always at a good round price), whether transient or permament citizens of the place. Crowds collect about dusk, of all shades and admixtures, in order to get a favorable location from which to view the grand display. Patricians fill the balconies of the neighboring houses; bridges are filled with spectators; sills and railings, balustrades and bindings are filled with animation and merriment, while uniformed footmen in front move rapidly along to enforce order armed with bayonets, and swordsmen mounted like cavalry close up the rear.

All eyes are watching the black mass of the Vatican Palace, from whose towers is to come the grand display of fireworks.

Instantaneously the glare of a rocket lights up the dome of St. Peter's, then another and another in rapid succession, followed by the roar of the deep-mouthed cannon, which shakes the foundations of Rome; while from the bosom of the castle ascends lighted balloons, thirty or forty in number, followed by hosts of rockets scattering stars like a shower of gold, which is followed by a grand illumination produced by thousands of shooting rockets in a single discharge, designed to represent an eruption of

Vesuvius; and then for almost an hour follows an infinite variety of girandoles, whirling wheels, shooting stars, embracing almost all the combinations of Pyrotechny, forming a display of unparalleled splendor, which it is well worth five years of life to behold. The whole castle is wrapped in a shroud of densest smoke at times, as if the fiends kept holiday on earth, while from the bosom of which may be heard deep thunders from the resounding cannon, as a grand outbreak of flashing fire, licking the ethereal dome of heaven in its madness, lights up the distant cross of St. Peter's and the crowded Palace of the Vatican.

The grand display concludes with a glorious sheet of flame sweeping upward along the whole front of the castle, bursting like a shower of glittering diamonds on bridge and bank of the river below, lighting old "Father Tiber" with the hues of a resplendent sunset.

In pursuing our walk about a quarter of a mile farther on we reach the commencement of the Piazza of St. Peter's, at the end of which stands the church, which is nearly the same distance still farther on. There are, properly speaking, three piazzas, the first being very nearly square, about two hundred and forty feet in length; the second elliptical, some five hundred and fifty feet in length by some five hundred and ten feet in breadth; and the third is quadrangular in shape, which grows gradually broader as it approaches the church, and is some three hundred feet in length and three hundred and sixty in breadth. The central one is called the "Piazza of St. Peter's," and is beautiful and magnificent, inlaid with broad, flat stones, bounded on either side by a sort of semi-elliptical colonnade, supporting two hundred and eighty-four large doric columns, which form a triple portico on each

side of the piazza, the central one of which being wide enough for two carriages to pass abreast. The colonnade is sixty-seven feet high by a breadth of fifty-six, while resting on the entablature is a balustrade, ornamented with two hundred statues, each one of which is eleven and one-half feet in height, making a very imposing array. In the centre stands an obelisk of red Egyptian granite, imported from Egypt by Caligula. It was erected at Heliopolis by a son of Sesostris, and is among the finest of its kind in Europe. It is one hundred and thirty feet in height; and it required forty-one machines, which the celebrated Fontana devised, in order to raise it from the earth, the power of which were all applied at the same time by eight hundred men and one hundred and sixty horses, the completion of which required eight days, while it took the same force four months to transport the obklisk three hundred paces.

Upon either side of this work of art is a beautiful fountain throwing a jet of water some fifteen feet high, clear and lucid as the ambient crystal; they are of the same uniform structure and forty feet high. The circular basins into which the falling water descends are of Oriental granite and finely finished.

Upon each side of the piazza, terminating the colonnades, is a gallery, the length of which is three hundred and ninety feet, leading to the vestibule of the church, to gain which you ascend a fine flight of stairs. Its length is four hundred and seventy-five feet, its breadth forty, and its height sixty-seven.

The facade of the church is 396 feet in width and 159 high, ornamented with four pilasters and eight Corinthian columns, each of which is eight feet in diameter and eighty-five feet high. On the top is a balustrade which supports

thirteen colossal statues representing Christ and the Apostles, each figure being seventeen feet high.

From this description of the outer details let us turn to the contemplation of the gigantic proportions and grandness of the interior of this magnificent edifice so famed in history.

It is in form like that of a Latin cross, and is 722 feet in length; its width in the transept of the cross is 455 feet, of the body of the church, 130 feet. The width of the nave, exclusive of the two side aisles, is ninety-five feet, and its height is 200; there are four arches through the walls of the nave which lead into the aisles; between each arch are two fluted Corinthian pilasters eighty feet in height; between the pilasters are two niches, containing each a marble statue more than twelve feet high, while above each of the arches is a niche filled with a statue twenty-four feet in height. The pavement is that of marble; the vault of the nave is covered with gilding. The aisles lead to four magnificent chapels on each side, surmounted with cupolas, which are emblazoned with rare and precious stones, while between these chapels are monuments erected in honor of departed Popes, magnificent in design, and as finely ornamented as the art of beauty can suggest. The cherubs which support the basins of holy water at the base of the two first pilasters are ten feet in height, while the pen in the hand of the Evangelist St. Mark, in the niche above, is eight feet in length. The baldachino, or canopy, which stands just beneath the dome and over the high altar, is formed of gilded bronze, and is supported by four spiral pillars, and cost $114,000. It is said that the gilding upon it cost $45,000.

Just in front of the baldachino is a small chapel, open from above, into which you may descend by a flight of

steps, where, according to tradition may be seen the burial place of St. Peter. The sides of this chapel are inlaid with gold, gems of every description, and precious stones, polished and peerless. Before the sacred shrine within this sacred place is a colossal statue of "Pius the Sixth," by Canova, the celebrated sculptor and artist. About the railings which surround the chapel are tastefully arranged 112 gilded lamps of very great size, which are kept constantly burning.

To the right of the nave, and near the cupola, is a bronze statue of St. Peter, seated beneath an overspreading canopy, whose subdued hue and mildness is like the floor of heaven, transparent and golden. This statue is an object of very great reverence, and no good Catholic passes it without going through the usual formula prescribed by priestly tenets, which is to stop and kiss the foot two or three times, in the mean time pressing the forehead against it between each salutation.

Beyond the dome stands the tribune, which has a semicircular form. Here, upheld by four colossal doctors of the Church (whose figures are eighteen feet high, composed of bronze), is the seat which tradition asserts was used by St. Peter himself. It is composed of wood, tastefully ornamented with ivory and gold; while just above it are four large angels, two of which support a crown, while still higher up are glorious representations of lesser cherubim. The whole of this fabric is bronze, obtained from the Pantheon at a very great expenditure of wealth and time.

But behold the dome of St. Peter's, which causes the world to wonder and artists to study its architectural design. From the pavement of the nave to the top of the cross it is in height 458 feet; its internal diameter

is 140 feet, while the four immense columns which support it measure in circumference 240 feet, and arise to a height of 178.

There it stands, a vast circular archway, like the bending heavens, over the astonished beholder, traversed by many galleries, decorated with gigantic statues, and emblazoned with a golden finish. One who has never seen it can but feebly imagine the reality which beams and breaks upon the beholder.

But why attempt to adequately describe it? St. Peter's is simply indescribable by pen of mortal. The lavish wealth of the interior is almost incredible and beyond calculation. The paintings in mosaic, of which twenty-nine may be seen, one over each of its altars, cost twenty-two thousand dollars apiece; making in the aggregate the sum of six hundred and thirty-eight thousand dollars. Besides these statues there are relievos, precious stones, rare marble, costly altar furniture, gilded and bronze statuary, which make up an enormous aggregate of wealth. There is concentrated the glory and the pride of Rome to the modern traveler and the romantic tourist.

These details doubtless will assist us in forming some relative opinion of the magnitude and magnificence of St. Peter's; but then, little idea of its greatness or of its grandeur may be had except by those whose good fortune permits them to behold it in all of its pristine glory, and to walk its marble naves, to survey its gorgeous chapels, to look up to its glowing vault, to gaze, spell-bound, upon its colossal monuments and gigantic statues, and to witness the sacred pomp of its ceremonials, its rites and its rituals, and to hear the peals of its numerous organs resounding like the harmony of Milton's heaven through its overshadowing dome.

At all times those who are permitted to worship beneath its roof, present a spectacle of picturesque beauty; but to behold its votaries assembled on Easter Sunday, when the Great Head of the Church ministers in person from its High Altar; when the sides of the Tribune are built with stagings and draped with cloth that seems of gold, adorned with orders and crosses; when the columns which support the dome are hung with draperies of deep scarlet, and the body of the vast edifice is thronged with curious thousands, composed of all kinds and classes who meet before its altars in the reverent attitude of prayer, and walk its broad aisles, while up the long nave between files of soldiers goes the great procession of cardinals and priests and of churchmen, arrayed in every variety of costume, bearing the Pope on their shoulders, who sits upon his throne with a star-lit canopy above him of the richest tissue, while on either side appears a fan of beautiful ostrich feathers, set in gold, with the assembled thousands kneeling around.

It is only on such occasions that the beholder is impressed with the wonderful magnificence of St. Peter's.

But while this great temple with its mighty magnitude commands our admiration, its history is replete with the greatest interest. It is builded upon the site of the foulest scenes that ever disgraced the annals of Rome; the very soil in which its foundations rest is wet with the blood spilled from the bosoms of its earliest martyrs, of men valiant and mighty, who, amid the crazed cries and cheers of the crowded circus, and by the fangs of infuriated beasts, testified with their lives as to the reality of the Gospel of Christ.

Successive generations through the lapse of three and a half centuries, amid the fall of empires, the birth of

dynasties and the progress of revolutions, this gigantic mass arose stone by stone and column after column into the air, at an expenditure of which no authentic record remains.

Wonderful work of art; glorious execution of a shapely design, which reflects in miniature something of the greatness of the fabric its votaries have erected in imagination for the souls of the faithful and the saints of God to worship in beyond the river of death, where the delectable hills arise in all their pristine beauty, which no pen may portray or human fancy describe. Wonderful structure; towering and majestic work of art, which is a witness of the ability of man's conceptions and his skill of another and former age. Where, indeed, may a greater be found on this sphere, unless it be that of the pyramids? But while the pyramids may have required the appliance of more mechanical skill in their erection, there is no such delicacy of touch and supernal grandeur to be seen about them as about St. Peter's dome. How many rapt, enthusiastic followers of the Pope have looked down through the ages upon the vestibule of St. Peter's, as a kind of celestial doorway leading to the dome of heaven; how many priests pressed in sectarian rites and robes of texture so stiff as not to bend, and shod in sandals whose soles never pressed unholy ground (as they are wont to believe) have flocked thitherward, penniless and poverty-stricken, to gain one soul-satisfying sight of the temple of God on earth and bow within its sacred precincts. How many self-inflicted torments have been imposed by votaries who have thither wended to partake of the broken body of Christ and drink of his blood, in that venerated spot sanctified by religious observances, where the sighs of expiring saints have gone floating home to heaven down through the

ages; that temple of temples dedicated to God by the death of so many martyrs, the brightness of whose vestures hath been dimmed with the blood of their dying in that agony of soul for the salvation of their tormentors, which none but those know who alone can realize the terrible doom of the damned. How many venerable popes have ministered from the high altar of St. Peter's since St. Peter has fallen to sleep within its sanctified chapel; and how many sorrowing but hopeful mothers and sisters have joined the pilgrim wanderers and journeyed here to obtain a refreshing from the showers of heavenly grace which fall so bountifully in those sacred precincts.

Ah! 'tis impossible for the beholder of to-day to forget all, all this, and look upon simply the outlines of that wonderful structure undetached from the historic scenes which arise around it. As well might one look upon the tomb of a loved one and believe that a clod of cold dirt rests there, instead of the peaceful slumbers of an immortal soul, or one to look on the cross on which the King of Glory died, and forget that the Redeemer ever lived.

There is a history, the world's history, which surrounds

> This venerable pile
> Of brick and tile,
> On which the angels
> Of Heaven smile;
> And where the gods look down,
> When there's a new Pope to crown,
> With sacred cross and silver gown.

Leaving St. Peter's, with all its surroundings, its associations, and its grand glory, let us take a parting retrospect of the city of the Cæsars, entombed in their mortal resting places; waiting in that state of seeming inactivity until the shadows are longer grown, and the silver notes

of a celestial trump shall call them home to a city whose builder and maker is God, and whose eternity is established.

On that resurrection morn, amid the multitudes assembled for enrollment for citizenship in that City of the Skies, no prouder specimens of manhood shall stand forth than those who performed such a conspicuous part in the great tragedy of the downfall of Rome; but how many of those shall pass muster and be permitted to enter heaven we must wait for the crowning day to determine. At all events, the heirs of Rome stand out in the world's history most conspicuous in the development and display of that sublime element of manhood which moved them with such an enthusiastic thrill of energy and daring in the days of her greatness.

There are brave men in Rome to-day, but none so brave as the masters fallen; there are devoted women, whose hands are training the tendrils of their loins for future rulers, but none so Mary-like as the mothers who have fallen asleep since the masters went away.

The downfall of Rome, and her history, belongs to another age, and he who would make it as of this doeth not well. The past of that mighty city is more mighty than her present to all minds; the fame of her fallen heroes more eternal than that of her living sons.

What may be the future history of this world-renowned city I know not; but it is hardly presumable that she will ever again attain to her former greatness, or that any of her sons will thunder from her senate chamber, or her forum, such burning words of eloquence as the fallen mighty utttered who now slumber in the silent peace of death beneath her moldered urns and monuments defaced by the fingers of Time. In what age of the world's history did

live so many gifted men as in that of Cæsar and Brutus? Romulus the first Emperor of Rome, with his contemporaries, laid broad and deep the foundation walls of that infant city whose fame was destined to command the attention of the world; and many an envious ruler longed to occupy the gilded chair of state which its founder first filled. Shortly the fame of that empire congregated thither the elite of the earth, the most immortal of mortals, the most godlike of mankind; but with all this brilliant array of intellect she fell—and what a fall! She fell to her mother earth, thus presaging the doom of mortals and the earthly end of all greatness; but beyond may we not finish the half-finished fabric of fame which we leave unfinished here?

FINIS.

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